THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE GERMAN PROTESTANT THEOLOGIANS AND THE NATION IN CRISIS, 1914 AND 1933

by

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THE GERMAN PROTESTANT THEOLOGIANS AND
THE NATION IN CRISIS, 1914 AND 1933

(Thesis Abstract)

When war broke out in August 1914, the German Protestant theologians, like their compatriots, rushed to the defense of their nation's honor. They eagerly placed theology in the service of the fatherland, adapting Christian concepts to fit the needs of the times, and preaching courage, determination, and national loyalty to their congregations.

The Germans were by no means unique in this regard. All over Europe the Great War was greeted with enthusiasm, and heralded by intellectuals as a great awakening and a test of national merit. Historians studying that period have generally regarded the reaction of the German theologians to the war as typical for the time. Moral judgment and criticism have rarely entered into discussions of the behaviour of the German intellectuals during the Great War.

The same cannot be said of the studies of political and professional groups in 1933. Criticism and moral condemnation permeate the histories of that period, and the established churches have frequently been chastized for their irresponsibility, their blindness, and their willingness to tolerate and even to promote the inhumanity and atrocity of the National Socialist regime.

This thesis is an attempt to examine and compare the reactions of the German Protestant theologians to these two twentieth century crises: the First World War and the National

Socialist seizure of power. The main source has been the Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Kirchenzeitung, the official organ of the Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Konferenz. Although the years 1914 to 1918, and 1933 to 1945, fall within the scope of this study, the emphasis is on the initial reactions of the theologians to the two crises of 1914 and 1933.

In both cases, there is evidence that theology was used to lend significance and legitimacy to political events, to justify national policies, and to inspire patriotism. There were, however, some important differences. The theologians in 1914 were almost unanimous in their attempts to accommodate theology to national values. In 1933, on the other hand, the theologians were sharply divided over the issue of the proper relationship between the church and the National Socialist state.

The theologians of 1914 and 1933 did, however, have one very important feature in common. Like the other intellectuals of their times, most of them followed the trends of the nation. It was only a few individuals, usually "outsiders," who managed to think independently and to foresee the dangers threatening the nation and the church.

PREFACE

Although literature abounds on German political, social and professional groups and their attitudes towards the First World War from 1914 to 1918, and towards the National Socialist seizure of power in 1933, no comparative analysis of responses to these two twentieth century crises has been made. On the contrary, attitudes towards these two events have been viewed quite differently. Responses to the outbreak of the war in 1914 and the subsequent events of World War I have been understood as being typical for that time--with the exception of the emotional Fritz Fischer debate--and little or no moral criticism has invaded historical analysis. The same cannot be said, however, of the studies on political and professional groups in the year 1933. Although fifty years have passed, the magnitude of crime and atrocity committed in the time between 1933 and 1945 has had an impact so lasting, that any discussion of certain groups and their attitudes towards the year 1933 involves highly moralistic judgments and criticisms. The one exception, Hannah Arendt's attempt to deal with the destruction of the Jews in an objective, scholarly way, made her the object of vehement attack, and occasioned a heated controversy.

In the following thesis, the attempt has been made to compare the responses of German Protestant theologians to the First World War with those to the year 1933 and the period that followed. The goal of this comparative study is a limited

one. It is a descriptive comparison and analysis which is the basis for more explicit questions. These questions, however, are intrinsically involved in this comparison as well. Were the responses in 1933 in any way a logical outcome of those in 1914? How had Protestant theologians responded to similar crises in the past? Does any major crisis in a nation lead to a highly emotional and irrational response?

Like Charles E. Bailey's 1978 Ph.D. dissertation, "Gott mit uns": Germany's Protestant Theologians in the First World War, this study deals with Protestant theologians. Unlike Bailey, however, I will compare the responses of the theologians to the First World War with those to 1933. I have also defined "theologians" more broadly, to include university trained pastors and church administrators, as well as academic theologians. In Bailey's dissertation, the theologians are examined as individual "historical personages," while this study will focus on the Lutheran theologians as an identifiable group, as represented in the Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Kirchenzeitung.

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INTRODUCTION

> 1914 - 1918 - 1933, das werden nach menschlichem Ermessen die grossen Jahre sein, wie sie noch nach Generationen als die entscheidenden Wendepunkte deutscher Geschichte in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts fortleben werden.
>
> -Allgemeine Evangelische Lutherische Kirchenzeitung, 1933[1]

> And he smote them with blindness.
>
> -2 Kings 6:18

The responses of German Protestant theologians to the events of 1914 and 1933 were shaped to an important extent by the position of the Lutheran church in German society. Since the time of the Reformation, sovereigns of the Reich's Protestant territories had also headed the ecclesiastical governments in their lands, as summi episcopi. The unification of Germany in 1871 did not substantially change that. The Lutheran church was not reorganized on a nation-wide basis, but retained its landeskirchliche character, and its ties to the Landesherren in the German lands.

In the late nineteenth century, the Lutheran church and the German state were natural allies. Both were conservative and authoritarian, both opposed the secular, reform-oriented attitudes of the liberals, and both felt threatened by the demands of the socialist workers' movement. Under the

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[1] "Wochenschau," Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Kirchenzeitung 52 (29 Dec. 1933):1226.

slogan "throne and altar," church and state formed a defensive alliance against attempts to alter the existing political and social structure.

It was a mutually beneficial relationship. The state supported and protected the church, while the church enhanced the state's credibility and encouraged obedience to its authority. There were, however, problems in this intimate association, especially as the church became increasingly dependent on the state for financial support. By the early twentieth century, two-thirds of the revenue of the church came from the taxpayers and direct state subsidies.[2] The church obtained this financial security at the price of independence. Pastors, while not technically civil servants, depended on the state for their livelihood.[3] They thus had the same duty as civil servants, to conform to governmental policies, or at least to refrain from public criticism of them.[4] Moreover, the intimate association of the church with the Wilhelmine state and the social order of the Kaiserreich enhanced the hostility of the Marxist workers' movement towards the church. The church became the enemy of socialism and a representative of reaction, not only

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[2]Jochen Jacke, Kirche zwischen Monarchie und Republik, (Hamburg: Hans Christian Verlag, 1976),26.

[3]Ibid. Pastors' income was also indirectly determined by the state, since pastors in Wilhelmine Germany insisted that their income be equal to that of academically trained Staatsbeamten.

[4]Ibid.,29.

because of ideological differences, but also because of its continuing affiliation with specific social power groups.

When war broke out in 1914, German Protestant theologians, like their compatriots, responded with fervent enthusiasm. The theologians were as eager as the historians and other intellectuals to prove their loyalty to Kaiser and fatherland, if not with the sword, then with the written and spoken word.

The defeat of Germany and the collapse of the monarchy in 1918 was an immense blow to the Lutheran church. The German Protestant Weltbild was shattered, as national humiliation replaced confident pride, and the monarchical system, which had been so intimately allied with the Lutheran church, ceased to exist.

Relations with the new republic were to prove much less harmonious. In keeping with Luther's teachings of submission to secular authorities, the church was officially correct in its relationship with the Weimar Republic. The republic, for its part, proved amenable to the interests of the Lutheran church. It was typical of the continuity from the Wilhelmine state to the Weimar Republic that the church retained its institutional privileges and its financial support.[5] These concessions did not, however, inspire the Lutheran church to loyalty to the republic. On the contrary, throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, the church allied itself with the right-wing opponents

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[5]Klaus Scholder, Die Kirchen und das Dritte Reich: Bd. 1, Vorgeschichte und Zeit der Illusionen 1918-1934 (Frankfurt/M: Verlag Ullstein, 1977), 33.

of Weimar. Theologians in the Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Kirchenzeitung, for example, frequently described the republic as religionslos, kirchenfeindlich, and der Staat ohne Grundsätze.

The theologians' antagonism towards Weimar was largely the result of their fear of communism and socialism. Like many middle- and upper-class Germans, the theologians had been obsessed with the possibility of revolution since the days of Bismarck. The Russian Revolution had exacerbated that paranoia. The theologians' perceptions of the new republic, like those of the right-wing bourgeois groups, were distorted by their fear of "bolshevism." Using the rhetoric of the German Nationalists, the theologians deplored the "Marxist" character of the Weimar Republic. They ignored the facts that neither did the Weimar Constitution reflect socialist doctrine, nor were the Social Democrats ever in a position to impose their principles on Germany. On the contrary, the Social Democrats only participated in the governing coalitions of the Weimar period for three and one-half years.

The fear of "bolshevism," coupled with virulent nationalism, prompted the orthodox Protestant theologians, like the right-wing groups, to greet the National Socialist seizure of power in 1933 with enthusiasm. However, right from the beginning, that enthusiasm was tinged with doubts about the new system. Moreover, the theologians were soon forced to realize that the church would not thrive in a totalitarian state.

By May 1933, the twenty-eight Landeskirchen had been united into a Reichskirche--the Deutsche Evangelische Kirche--but this apparent unity was deceiving. Protest against the church's acceptance of National Socialist ideology, and its departure from the Lutheran confession, especially by adopting the Arierparagraph (Aryan Clause),[6] led to the establishment of the Bekennende Kirche (Confessing Church) in 1934. The relationship of this movement to the National Socialist state was increasingly precarious, as it attempted to avoid political involvement, while maintaining confessional integrity.

Martin Luther had addressed the problem of church and state, but his teaching of the separation of the two spheres of authority did not give his followers guidelines specific enough to dictate the proper Christian response to every kind of national crisis. The liberal school of theology, which in the early twentieth century, surrounded the Berlin theologian, Adolf von Harnack, did not provide any new insight on the question of church and state. According to liberal theologians, such as

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[6]The Aryan Clause was adopted by the National Socialist government in April 1933. It was intended to remove "non-Aryan" civil servants from office. Some elements of the Lutheran church, especially members of the Glaubensbewegung Deutscher Christen, advocated the introduction of the Aryan Clause into ecclesiastical affairs. See Richard Gutteridge, Open thy Mouth for the Dumb! The German Evangelical Church and the Jews 1879-1950 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1976), 91-151.

Harnack, Christianity was both a historical phenomenon, which should be critically analyzed and evaluated, and at the same time, a profoundly personal inner experience. Harnack's theology focussed on "God the father," the "infinite value" of the human soul, and the interrelation of the soul with God. Like Luther, Harnack believed in a sharp division of spiritual and secular powers. He claimed that, according to Jesus' teachings, the difference between the two kingdoms was so great, that conflict could not exist. Moreover, Harnack contended, Jesus' teachings were directed at the individual; they were not a "theoretical system of doctrine or philosophy of the universe."[7]

The more doctrinal, orthodox school of German theology showed itself equally as uninterested as liberal theology, in rethinking the dilemma of church-state relations. It was the "dialectic theology" of Karl Barth which provided a new perspective on this problem. Barth described God as the "completely other," beyond human comprehension, yet full of grace towards mankind. This grace took the form of God's word, and it was to God's word alone that the church owed her allegiance. God's grace, as manifested in the gospel, was the only criterion which should determine the relationship between church and state.[8] The impetus for the development of Barth's "new theology" had

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[7]Adolf Harnack, What is Christianity?, trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders, 3d ed., rev. (New York: G.P.Putnam's Sons, 1904), 149. This book, a series of sixteen lectures, presents lucidly and concisely the basic tenets of Harnack's theology.

[8]See Karl Barth, Church and State, trans. G. Ronald Howe, (London: Student Christian Movement, 1939).

been, to a great extent, his perception of the inadequacy of both liberal and orthodox theology to respond in a Christian way to the First World War.

This "new theology" was not represented in the Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Kirchenzeitung. On the contrary, that newspaper maintained a consistently conservative, orthodox line, throughout the years from 1914 to 1941. In spite of divisions among theologians, however, there are several reasons why the Kirchenzeitung can be regarded as representative of an important segment of the Lutheran church. It was the official journal of the Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Konferenz,[9] and as such contained reports of meetings and important addresses to the conference.[10] It was directed at theologians and educated laymen,[11] and had the largest circulation of any Lutheran weekly.[12] The impressive list of contributors indicates that it was a forum for the opinions of prominent theologians. Frequent contributors included Paul Althaus (1888-1966), pastor, Krankenpfleger during World War I, and professor of New Testament and Systematic Theology; Herman von Bezzel (1861-1917), president

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[9]See for example AELKZ 24 (15 June 1917):545-6.

[10]See for example AELKZ 21 (26 May 1916):489.

[11]"Zum 50. jährigen Jubiläum unserer Kirchenzeitung," AELKZ 43 (31 Oct. 1917):1006.

[12]Gutteridge, 2; Scholder,173-4.

of the Bavarian Lutheran Oberkonsistorium; Ludwig Ihmels (1858-1933), Bishop of Saxony; Julius Kaftan (1848-1926), professor of Systematic Theology, and Bruno Doehring (1879-1961), pastor and later Hof- und Domprediger in Berlin. The Kirchenzeitung showed remarkable continuity in the years from 1914 to 1933. Some of the contributors who had been prominent in 1914, such as Althaus, Professor Hans Preuss of Erlangen, and Wilhelm Zoellner, the Generalsuperintendent of Westphalia, were still active in 1933. The editor of the Kirchenzeitung from 1914 to its termination in 1941 was the Leipzig pastor, Wilhelm Laible.[13] Laible himself showed remarkable continuity throughout the three decades he edited the paper. He was consistently orthodox in his theology, conservative and patriotic in his politics, and anti-liberal in both areas. Laible typified the group of theologians which Klaus Scholder calls die alten Nationalprotestanten.[14]

Although the years 1914 to 1918, and 1933 to 1941, fall within the scope of this study, the focus is on 1914 and 1933.

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[13]Beginning in 1939, however, although Laible was still acknowledged as the editor, a short note was added to the staff list: "Für den gesamten Inhalt verantwortlich Stud. Prof. Joh. Bergdolt." Bergdolt, judging from the articles he wrote, was a loyal supporter of the National Socialists. There is no information as to exactly who "planted" Bergdolt in the Kirchenzeitung office, but his appearance there corresponds with a period of increasing pressure from the National Socialist Agencies on the churches. The Ministry of Propaganda was especially active in "urging" church newspapers to declare support for the war effort. See J.S. Conway, The Nazi Persecution of the Churches (New York: Basic Books, 1968),233.

[14]Scholder, 173,181.

There are a number of factors which make 1933, rather than 1939, suitable for a comparison with 1914. Like August 1914, January 1933 was heralded by German contemporaries, among them the theologians, as a turning point, a new beginning.[15] The rhetoric of the early 1933 issues resembled that of 1914. War imagery and military metaphors were often used, and contemporary events were described as der Kampf des Volkes um seine Freiheit, um Untergang oder Aufstieg. Such rhetoric, such enthusiasm for the "new dawn" were conspicuously absent in the Kirchenzeitung in September 1939.

There is another important reason for focussing on 1933 rather than 1939 in a comparison with 1914. Throughout the First World War, censorship was the responsibility of the military. The Kirchenzeitung, like other German newspapers, was restricted in its coverage of the events of the war.[16] Certain internal issues were also banned from discussion in the press. Nevertheless, there is little evidence that these restrictions hampered freedom of expression in the Kirchenzeitung. Theological issues were discussed freely, as were the spiritual aspects of the war. In early 1933, the Kirchenzeitung was similarly free, but that freedom was to prove short-lived under the National Socialist regime.

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[15] See for example P. Otto, "Kriegsbilder aus der Heimat. I. Die Grossstadt," AELKZ 35 (28 Aug. 1914):819; and "Wochenschau," AELKZ 5 (3 Feb. 1933):114.

[16] Kurt Koszyk, Deutsche Pressepolitik im Ersten Weltkrieg (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1968),13,69-75.

On 13 July 1933, the Kirchenzeitung was "vom Polizeipräsidium Leipzig bis auf weiteres verboten worden wegen des Artikels 'Kirchenunruhen in Sachsen'."[17] It was allowed to resume publication on 26 July, but other incidents stifled its freedom of expression. Other newspapers were being suppressed; on 15 September 1933, the Kirchenzeitung reported the suspension of Die Reformation and Deutsche Lehrerzeitung.[18] In 1938, more direct action was taken against the Kirchenzeitung. It was suspended on 21 December, and only permitted to resume publication on 9 June 1939. When it reappeared, its size had dwindled to half the previous number of pages. In May 1940, a new column entitled "Aus dem Zeitgeschehen" was introduced.[19] It presented an official version of war news, and appears, from its style and orientation, to have been written by someone outside the Kirchenzeitung's regular circle of theological contributors. "Aus dem Zeitgeschehen" gradually expanded from two short columns to almost an entire page. The number and length of the paper's other features diminished accordingly. On 30 May 1941, the following notice announced the termination of the Allgemeine

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[17] The offending article was "Kirchenunruhen in Sachsen," AELKZ 27 (7 July 1933):639. Probably the sentence which the government found the most offensive was the expression of disillusionment with the regime: "Das Beklagenswerte ist die Erschütterung der Freudigkeit und des Vertrauens zum neuen Reich gerade unter denen, die bisher dafür begeistert waren."

[18] "Kirchliche Nachrichten," AELKZ 37 (15 Sept. 1933):868.

[19] AELKZ 19 (10 May 1940).

Evangelisch- Lutherische Kirchenzeitung:

> "An unsere Leser! Die Kriegswirtschaft erfordert stärkste Konzentration aller Kräfte. Diese Zusammenfassung macht es notwendig, dass unsere Kirchenzeitung mit dem heutigen Tag bis auf weiteres ihr Erscheinen einstellt, um Menschen und Material für andere kriegswichtige Zwecke freizumachen."[20]

This study is divided into four chapters. The first deals with the perceptions of the theologians of the events of 1914 and 1933. Chapter Two examines the way Christian concepts were used to give religious meaning to the events of the First World War and the Nazi years. In the third chapter, the activities of theologians are discussed, while the fourth chapter deals with the adaptation of the content of theology to the Zeitgeist by studying beliefs about God, Jesus, the Old Testament, and eschatology.

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[20] AELKZ 22 (30 May 1941):244. The expiration of the Kirchenzeitung, it seems, was not simply the result of paper shortages. In an open letter to Dr. Goebbels in April 1942, Württemberg Landesbischof Theophil Wurm implied that the Christian press, as a whole, had shared the Kirchenzeitung's fate: "Was die Verteilung der Lasten betrifft, so erinnere ich daran, dass die Einschränkungen des Papierverbrauchs ganz einseitig die kirchliche Bevölkerung getroffen haben. Jedermann kann eine oder mehrere politische Zeitungen halten; eine kirchliche Gemeindepresse aber gibt es nicht mehr." "Offenes Wort an den Reichsminister Dr. Goebbels (1. April 1942)," in Heinrich Hermelink, hrsg., Kirche im Kampf: Dokumente des Widerstands und des Aufbaus in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands von 1933 bis 1945 (Tübingen: Rainer Wunderlich Verlag Hermann Leins, 1950),554. See also "Landesbischof D. Wurm an Reichsminister Dr. Lammers über die Einschränkung des christlichen Buchhandels, (5.März 1943)," in Ibid.,635-6.

CHAPTER I

THEOLOGICAL PERCEPTIONS AND POLITICAL EVENTS

> Wer den lebendigen Gott jetzt nicht hört, wird ihn bis zu seiner Todesstunde nicht hören. Der Herr schenke uns nach der Züchtigung des grossen Krieges eine friedsame Furcht der Gerechtigkeit; deutschen Glauben, felsenfest, ein neues deutsches Volk, das aufrichtig und tatenfroh in Gottes Wegen und Jesu Fussstapfen wandelt. Das wäre ein deutsches Weihnachten ohnegleichen.
>
> -Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Kirchenzeitung, 1914[1]

> Wir haben doch gerade jetzt in unserem Volke ein Grosses erleben dürfen, einen völligen Umbruch des Zeitgeistes. Die alten Werte von Treue und Redlichkeit, von Zucht und Sitte, Volksbewusstsein und Vaterlandsliebe, Mannhaftigkeit und Opfersinn sind wieder lebendig geworden.
>
> -Landespfarrer Reichardt, 1933[2]

Although the events of August 1914 were very different from those of January 1933, there were remarkable similarities in the way German Protestant theologians perceived these crises. Both were heralded as turning points for the German nation, and in both cases, theologians hoped and expected religious renewal to be a product of national regeneration. At the beginning of the Great War and also in 1933, theologians were convinced that the church and Christian morality were losing ground, and that regeneration was urgently needed to halt "moral decay." The theologians in both cases used images from previous events in German history to articulate their perceptions, and in 1914 as in 1933, they felt the need to create heroes and "charismatic" figures, according to their own

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[1] "Kriegsbilder aus der Heimat. II. Die Kleinstadt," AELKZ 37 (11 Sept. 1914):865.

[2] Reichardt, "Pfingstgeist," AELKZ 7 (17 Feb. 1933):161.

ideals and images. Although the First World War and the National Socialist regime were greeted enthusiastically at the outset, in both situations optimism turned to disillusionment, as events did not develop in the way the theologians had hoped, and religious revival failed to materialize.

Anticipation of a spiritual renewal was the dominant theme in the Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Kirchenzeitung during the early phases of the First World War. The conviction that a new age was dawning was frequently expressed. In this respect, the theologians were typical of the bourgeois intellectuals of their time. The pessimism of the fin de siècle had prepared the way for exaggerated optimism at the outbreak of war.[3] War, it was hoped--not only in Germany, but all over Europe--would usher in a spiritual revolution, and provide the decisive "blow of fate" to rescue society from its decadence. There are innumerable examples of this intense enthusiasm. The Catholic theologian Joseph Mausbach wrote in 1914:

> "Es ist kein böser Tag und keine Stunde der Finsternis; es ist ein grosser Tag, ein Tag des Gerichts, ein Tag des Herrn."[4]

Thomas Mann described the outbreak of war in 1914 as "Reinigung, Befreiung,...und eine ungeheure Hoffnung."[5]

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[3]Robert Wohl discusses the fin de siècle mood and the effects of the war on the "generation of 1914" in France, Germany, England, Spain and Italy, in The Generation of 1914 (Cambridge,Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979).

[4]quoted in Karl Hammer, Deutsche Kriegstheologie (1870-1918) (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1971),265.

[5]"Gedanken im Kriege," in Thomas Mann, Gesammelte Werke, 13 vols (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1974)13:533. The

The theologians translated the enthusiasm for the war and the anticipation of revival into religious terms. They expected the war to bring regeneration, not only to the German nation, but also to the church. In the Kirchenzeitung, a pastor jubilantly related his experiences on the first day of mobilization:

> Jener denkwürdige Sonntag machte zugleich ein Kirchenvolk mobil, das sonst geruhig und einer selbstverständlichen Gewohnheit folgend seinen Sonntag neben der Kirche her verlebte, als wäre sie eitel Luft.[6]

He emphasized the profound sincerity of feeling he perceived in his congregation:

> Viele knien ganz von selbst nieder, wenn das Beichtgebet gesprochen wird; und ebenso bei der Ausspendung des Sakraments... Man wischt sich nach dem Genusse des Kelches nicht mehr so kramphaft den Mund als fürchte man Ansteckung. Nein, weihevoll wird gefeiert, und wie viele sind endlose Jahre hindurch nicht mehr an dieser Stätte gesehen worden.[7]

The author admitted that the crowded churches were the result of fear more than piety, but concluded optimistically that fear often pointed the way to a new life. An article of September 1914 illuminated this idea of "new life." Only a few months previously, its author recounted, a Social Democrat had received thunderous applause in his community

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historian Friedrich Meinecke described the "exaltation of spirit" of August 1914 in retrospect, as "one of the most precious, unforgettable memories of the highest sort." Friedrich Meinecke, The German Catastrophe: Reflections and Recollections, trans. Sidney B. Fay (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950),25. Another historian, Friedrich Thimme, described his enthusiasm at the outbreak of war in a letter to his brother: "Ich traue es dem deutschen Volke jetzt zu, dass es aus- und durchhält, und ich lebe der Hoffnung, dass diese ganze furchtbare Prüfung dem deutschen Volke nicht bloss den schliesslichen Sieg, sondern auch eine dauernde innere Erhebung bringen wird." Friedrich Thimme to Karl Thimme, 15 November 1914, Nachlass Thimme (Bundesarchiv, Koblenz).

[6] P. Otto, "Kriegsbilder aus der Heimat. I. Die Grossstadt," AELKZ 35 (28 Aug. 1914):820.

[7] Ibid.,821.

for demanding religious anarchy. Now, he exulted, there was a return to the church as no one had even imagined possible.[8]

A similar excitement and sense of a new beginning were also expressed in 1933. Even before Hitler's Machtübernahme, a Kirchenzeitung editorial of 13 January heralded

> das Anbrechen eines Geistesfrühlings, zwar noch ringend mit schwarzen Nebeln und giftigen Dünsten, aber doch ein Neues. Die gottgeschenkten Güter, Volk und Vaterland, werden neu erkannt, Eigennutz weicht dem gemeinen Nutzen, Religionsverhöhnung der Religionsehrung, die Jugend entzündet sich zu neuen, reineren Idealen.[9]

The Kirchenzeitung's "Wochenschau" column for 17 February reiterated this enthusiasm:

> So stark, wie seit langem nicht, steht man unter dem Eindruck, dass in Deutschland Geschichte geschrieben wird in diesen Tagen und Wochen.[10]

The enthusiasm of the theologians in 1933, however, had its limits. The Kirchenzeitung reflected ambivalence and disagreement among the theologians. Could true religious revival be occasioned

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[8] "Die Wirkung des Krieges auf die Kleinstadt," AELKZ 37 (11 Sept. 1914):865. According to Heinrich Missalla's analysis of Catholic wartime sermons, Catholics too focussed on the spiritual effects of the war. Common themes were: "Der Krieg als Weg der Erneuerung," "Der Krieg als Strafe und als Ruf zur Busse," "Der Krieg als Erzieher," and "Der Krieg als Gottesoffenbarung." Heinrich Missalla, "Gott mit uns". Die deutsche katholische Kriegspredigt 1914-1918 (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1968), 51-66.

[9] "Vorwort" II, AELKZ 2 (13 Jan. 1933):28.

[10] "Wochenschau," AELKZ 7 (17 Feb. 1933):161.

by national, political developments? Did the National Socialist revolution actually represent the kind of national awakening the theologians desired? This ambivalence was expressed by Wilhelm Laible, the editor of the Kirchenzeitung, in January 1933. He praised "das Aufwachen des nationalen Sinns," "die Begeisterung der Jugend für das Vaterland, für deutsche Mannestüchtigkeit, Mut, und Wehrhaftigkeit," "den ritterlichen adligen Zug, der des Vaterlandes Schmach tief empfindet und seine Ketten sprengen möchte."[11] However, Laible vehemently denounced attempts to mix politics and religion, and to subject the church to the ideology of the national movement:

> Nun und nimmer [kann] aus dem Volk die Kirche kommen... die Kirche kommt von Gott. Und nimmer aus der Rasse die wahre Religion; die Wahrheit kommt von Gott und dem der gesagt hat: "Ich bin die Wahrheit".... Man verstehe uns recht. Nicht die nationale Erhebung ist Gottlosenfront, daran ist keine Gedanke; aber was sich in sie eingemischt hat, diese Pläne mit einer Deutschkirche, mit der Knechtung der Kirche unter der Staatsgewalt, Unterwerfung des Christentums unter den Nationalismus, dieses Eifern gegen die Schriften und die ewigen Offenbarungen Gottes atmet denselben Geist, der im Bolschewismus sich ausbreitet.

Generalsuperintendent Otto Dibelius also expressed misgivings about the national revolution, in his address to the Protestant Festgottesdienst on the "day of Potsdam," 21 March 1933. Dibelius chose as his text Romans 8:31, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" He greeted the new regime with optimism, and expressed the hope that a true Volksgemeinschaft, as he believed had existed in August 1914, was again within reach. Dibelius

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[11] Wilhelm Laible, "Vorwort," AELKZ 1 (6 Jan. 1933):7.

ended his sermon however, with a distinct warning:

> "Wir wären nicht wert,... eine evangelische Kirche zu heissen, wenn wir nicht mit demselben Freimut, mit dem Luther es getan, hinzufügen wollten: staatliches Amt darf sich nicht mit persönlicher Willkür vermengen. Der Kirche heisses Sehnen ist es, dass eine neue deutsche Zukunft heraufgeführt werde von Männern, die aus Dank für Gottes Gnade ihr Leben heiligen in Zucht und Liebe, und dass der Geist solcher Männer dann das ganze Volk durchdringe!"[12]

Similar ambivalence was apparent in Studiendirektor Martin Doerne's article of June 1933. According to Doerne, National Socialism and Christianity shared their opposition to Marxism and Liberalism, their belief in a geschaffene rather than a gemachte world, and their encouragement of Christian education and morality.[13] However, he warned that the church would not and could not accept the "Messianism" which in his opinion was the greatest temptation of the National Socialist movement.[14] Professor Adolf Köberle was even more explicit about his misgivings. He rejoiced that Germany was experiencing a religious awakening, but admitted:

> Aber freilich, dieses religiöse Erwachen aus einem säkularen Weltrausch, aus Gottverneinung und Gottverachtung ist begleitet von schweren Fiebererscheinungen. Man möchte sich von ganzen Herzen über die gewaltige Wendung freuen können, die da vor unseren Augen geschieht, und doch läuft so vieles dabei mit, vorauf man nur mit Sorge und Erschrecken blicken kann.[15]

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[12] quoted in Anneliese Thimme, Flucht in den Mythos: Die Deutschnationale Volkspartei und die Niederlage von 1918 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 63.

[13] Martin Doerne, "Die Kirche vor dem Anspruch der Nation," AELKZ 25 (23 June 1933):580.

[14] Doerne, "Die Kirche"III, AELKZ 27 (7 July 1933):628.

[15] Adolf Köberle, "Das Wort vom Kreuz und die religiöse Lage der Gegenwart," AELKZ 28 (14 July 1933):652.

Kirchenzeitung articles in 1933 reflected the ambivalence of the theologians. They claimed support for the new regime--although their misgivings were apparent--but rejected the religious implications of National Socialism. Maintaining this somewhat precarious position necessitated turning a blind eye to the more obviously offensive aspects of National Socialism. This is precisely what the Kirchenzeitung urged its readers to do.

> Wenn es um grosse Entscheidungen von historischer Tragweite geht, wenn Kräfte revolutionären Charakters um die Macht ringen, dann ist es wirklich fehl am Platz, sich in kleinlicher Kritik an dieser oder jener Einzelmassnahme der Regierung, an dieser oder jener politischen Persönlichkeit zu ergehen, die einem weniger gefällt. Man kann nur vom Herzen hoffen, dass das grosse Experiment gelingt.[16]

Many of the theologians, German nationalists at heart, accepted National Socialism as a manifestation of their nationalist ideals.[17] At the same time, however, they were motivated in their endorsement of the new regime by anxieties about the future of the church.

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[16] "Wochenschau," AELKZ 9 (3 March 1933):210.

[17] There are many indications that the sympathies of the theologians lay with the German Nationalists. There were pastors "in abundance" in the Fatherland Party since its inception in 1917. Meinecke described those pastors as "lacking in judgment and ... bound by convention." Meinecke, German Catastrophe,29. Between 1924 and 1933, the number of pastors in the Deutschnationale Reichstagsfraktion increased considerably. A. Thimme,27-8. When Hitler was named Chancellor in January 1933, the Landesbischof of Württemberg, Theophil Wurm, estimated that at least eighty percent of Protestant voters supported the Harzburg front of Hindenburg, Hitler and Hugenberg. See Scholder, 278-9, and Günther van Norden, "Widerstand im deutschen Protestantismus 1933-1945," in Gegner des Nationalsozialismus: Wissenschaftler und Widerstandskämpfer auf der Suche nach historischer Wirklichkeit, hrsg. Christoph Klessmann, Falk Pingel (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 1980),103.

They regarded the challenge of the national revolution as an ultimatum to the church. If the church failed to participate in the national transformation and to capitalize on its impetus, it would be left behind, an isolated, irrelevant, outmoded institution. Because of this anxiety, the Kirchenzeitung urged its readers to reject detachment from political affairs, and to embrace the new Germany. The column "Kirchliche Nachrichten" from 17 March 1933 illustrated this anxiety. The columnist described the elections of 5 March as "der Kampf des Volkes um seine Freiheit," "um Untergang oder Aufstieg." This was no time "zum Auf der Seite stehen, sondern zum Mittun." For this reason, the columnist had been sadly disappointed that, when Hitler had spoken to Germany by radio from Königsberg, on the eve of the election, 4 March 1933, no bells had rung out the church's approbation. In fact, the Königsberg consistory had forbidden the ringing of the bells on this occasion. As Ersatz, previously taped recordings of the bells had to be used for Hitler's radio broadcast. The column concluded with a warning to the church not to stand aside in "die Stunde Gottes."[18]

Württemberg Landesbischof Theophil Wurm, in an April 1933 address to the pastors in his jurisdiction, also urged the church to participate in the national revolution.

> [Es] liegt für die evangelische Kirche wahrhaftig kein Grund vor, abseits zu stehen--vielmehr darf und muss sie dafür danken, dass durch diese Einigung der völlige

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[18] "Kirchliche Nachrichten," AELKZ 11 (17 March 1933):260.

> Zusammenbruch von Volk und Staat und der Sieg zerstörender Mächte im letzten Augenblick verhindert worden ist.[19]

Wurm's statement illustrates the obsessive fear of impending communist revolution which many theologians had. This German Nationalist paranoia was another reason the theologians encouraged support of the National Socialist regime, despite their misgivings about it.

The "Deutsche Christen" ("German Christians") effectively played on the church's fear of alienation from the impetus of the National Socialist revolution to gain support, or at least tolerance, from their more moderate Protestant counterparts. The Glaubensbewegung Deutscher Christen was a political church group founded in 1932. Its goal was to increase the influence of National Socialism in the church administration and among church members. The "German Christians" interpreted the Volksbewegung as God's call to his people, and tried to transpose the spirit of the "new Germany" onto the church.[20] Very few of the orthodox theologians who contributed

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[19]Wurm's address to the Geistlichen of Württemberg was printed in "Kirchliche Nachrichten - Württemberg," AELKZ 14 (7 April 1933):334. Theophil Wurm (1868-1953) was later one of the leading members of the Confessing Church. He managed to keep the Württemberg church intact under his leadership, and made it one of the strongest components of the Confessing Church. He spoke out courageously against the National Socialists' euthanasia program and the persecution of the Jews. See for example his letter to Minister of the Interior Dr. Frick, in Karl Kupisch, Quellen zur Geschichte des deutschen Protestantismus (1871-1945), Quellensammlung zur Kulturgeschichte, hrsg. Wilhelm Treue, Bd.11 (Göttingen: Musterschmidt-Verlag, 1960),300-5; also "Letzter grundsätzlicher Appell D. Wurms an Hitler und die Mitglieder der Reichsleitung über das Vorgehen gegen 'privilegierte Nichtarier'," in Hermelink,654-60.

[20]For a detailed discussion of the "German Christians," see Scholder, chapter 12, "Die Deutschen Christen 1931-1933," 239-74.

to the Kirchenzeitung joined this movement, and the Kirchenzeitung's attitude towards it was consistently sceptical. Orthodox theologians, however, were still sensitive to accusations like that made by the "German Christian" Bishop of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Franz Rendtorff, in June 1933:

> Eine evangelische Kirche, die von der gegenwärtigen deutschen Revolution unberührt bliebe, hätte aufgehört, Kirche zu sein. Sie würde scheiden von dem, was heute Volk ist, was heute Geschichte ist. Sie würde sich entscheiden für ein ewiges Gestern und sich entscheiden gegen das Morgen.[21]

In 1914 and in 1933, the conviction that religious revitalization was urgently required, was based on the belief that the church and Christian morality were losing ground. Theologians in 1914 believed Germany society was in dire need of religious revival. From 1910 to 1913, an estimated 60,000 people had left the church.[22] The prewar mood in Germany was described by the Württemberg pastor Christoph Blumhardt jr. as "eine Fäulnis," "lauter Feste und Lachen und Tanzen und lauter Vereinigungen auf zeitliche Sachen, lauter Parteihader."[23] The theologian Paul Althaus painted an even blacker picture of prewar

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[21]Rendtorff's speech printed in "Konflikte in Mecklenburg-Schwerin um die Wahl D.v.Bodelschwingh," AELKZ 23 (9 June 1933):543. Rendtorff's accusation, and the theologians' anxious attempts to keep the church in tune with the times raise an interesting question. Do such anxieties reflect a dilemma inherent in the nature of the church? The church is such an old institution, and its language and images must continually be modernized and modified, if they are to be meaningful. At the same time, however, the church must strive to retain its own essence. The fear of losing the young people, which has plagued the church for centuries, is possibly an expression of this dilemma.

[22]Hammer,172.

[23]quoted in Ibid.,235.

Germany:

> War es blosse Schwarzseherei, wenn alle ernster Denkenden über die zunehmende Gottentfremdung und Entchristlichung in unserem deutschen Volke vor dem Kriege klagten? Über den Mangel an sittlichem Pflichtbewusstsein, an Selbstzucht, an sozialem Gemeinsinn und Opferwilligkeit?... Ein langer Friede kann zum Fluche und Verderben für ein Volk werden, wie die Geschichte tausendmal gezeigt hat.[24]

Decreasing birthrates were frequently presented as evidence of moral degeneration. In 1915, the Kirchenzeitung called the decline in birthrates "der ärgste Fluch über einem Geschlecht," and described the extent to which this plague had already infected German society:

> Wenig oder keine Kinder zu haben galt als klug und anständig; eine kinderreiche Mutter zu sein als töricht und unanständig. Man schloss bereits die Ehe mit dem Übereinkommen, kinderlos zu bleiben, und war stolz auf diese Anteilnahme am Selbstmord des Volkes.[25]

The theologians of 1933 shared the conviction of their predecessors of 1914, that theirs was a time of moral decay, a time when momentous change was necessary to prevent the total destruction of virtue. The first issue of the Kirchenzeitung for 1933 claimed:

> Das Volk war nie in solcher Nacht wie heute, auch besonnene, weitblickende Männer reden von einer "furchtbaren Zeit", in der wir leben, und prophezeien, dass es noch ärger werde.[26]

Wilhelm Zoellner, the president of the Deutsche Evangelische

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[24] Paul Althaus, "Der Krieg und unser Gottesglaube" II, AELKZ 27 (2 July 1915):629.

[25] "Vorwort," AELKZ 1 (1 Jan. 1915):2; see also Julius Kaftan, AELKZ 21 (21 May, 1915):486; and "Wochenschau," AELKZ 33 (14 Aug. 1914):786.

[26] "Vorwort," AELKZ 1 (6 Jan. 1933):2.

Kirchenausschuss, described the period before 1933 as one in which individualism had corroded the church. Theologians had taught what they pleased, and the Gospel had become a Klumpen Wachs, from which everyone could make what they wished.[27] Laible also blamed modern theology for much of the degeneration he perceived.

> Das Volk kennt die Bibel nicht mehr, es weiss nur noch, was man an der Bibel auszusetzen hat.... Dafür hat die jahrzehntelange Arbeit einer modernistischen Theologie gesorgt, die alles und jedes unter ihr Seziermesser nahm, keinen Stein auf dem anderen liess, der nicht zerbrochen wurde.[28]

The cries of impending doom and moral decay of the theologians in 1914 and 1933 should not be taken too seriously as actual descriptions of those years. Every generation perpetuates the myth of "paradise lost," every generation views its own era as a time of degeneration, and looks back nostalgically to the "good old days." The historian Hans Delbrück illustrated this phenomenon in an article in 1893 entitled "Die gute alte Zeit."[29] Using quotations from a

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[27]Zoellner's speech was summarized in P. Blindow, "Die lutherische Vereinigung des Rheinlandes zum Neubau der Kirche," AELKZ 17 (28 April 1933):401.

[28]Laible, "Vorwort" III, AELKZ 3 (19 Jan. 1934):51. Both Zoellner's and Laible's statements are also illustrations of the anti-liberalism of the political and theological right in the Weimar years. For a discussion of anti-liberalism, see Kurt Sontheimer, Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1962),"Die Verachtung des Liberalismus,"181-88.

[29]Hans Delbrück, "Die Gute Alte Zeit," Preussische Jahrbücher 71 (1893):1-28. Even the nature of the theologians' complaints in 1914 and 1933 is almost identical to that of the quotations Delbrück presented. Lamentations over the disintegration of the family, the denial of authority, the decline of Christianity and the

variety of sources, including many from theologians and theological journals, he established that such complaints of decay and degeneration have characterized descriptions of contemporary times since classical antiquity.

Another aspect of the "good old days" syndrome was the tendency of theologians to compare the crises in which they found themselves with previous moments in Germany's past, and to seek guidelines in history to define their own perceptions and emotions. The use of images from the past served to lend significance and credibility to contemporary causes. However, "history is not a paintbox," at the disposal of anyone who wishes to lend authority to his own position.[30]

During the early phases of World War I, historical allusions were most frequently made to the war of 1870/71. This was

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degeneration of morality are as old as the church itself. For example, Delbrück included the following:
"Heutzutage verlangen die Jungen völlige Freiheit von Strafen durch Eltern- oder Meisterhand.... Darum auch so viele Processe zwischen Eltern und Kindern." Evangelische Kirchenzeitung, 1869.
"Da ist kein verachteter und verfluchter Ding auf den Erdboden als das liebe Evangelium." Martin Luther.
"Am meisten würden die Bierhäuser besucht und nehme mit Untergang alles christlichen Wesens das viehische Saufen, Ehebruch, Gotteslästerung mit jeglichem Jahr zu." Sixteenth century.
"Alle Scheu vor göttlichen und menschlichen Gesetzen ist geschwunden, die bischöflichen Verordnungen werden verachtet, jeder thut, was ihm beliebt." Erzbischof Herivaeus von Rheims, 909 A.D.
Delbrück,4,16,17,24.

[30]Karl Barth, Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century: Its Background & History, trans. Brian Cozens and John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1959),22.

partly due to the fact that it was the most recent war involving Germany, and some veterans were still alive. In September 1914, for example, 1870 was referred to as a time of religious revival, comparable to 1914:

> Was ein namhafter Feldherr des Krieges von 1870 von dem Schlachtfelde bei Sedan schreibt: "Da war Darwin vergessen, aber den Namen des Erlösers rief man an und horchte mit ehrerbietiger Andacht auf die Predigt von ihm", das sehen wir auch jetzt sich erfüllen. Es geht wieder eine Welle religiöser Erhebung durch die Volksseele.[31]

However, as it became increasingly obvious that the Great War was very different from the Franco-Prussian War,[32] fewer references to 1870/71 were made. When images were drawn from that earlier conflict, it was in contrast to the current situation. Theodor Kaftan, the Generalsuperintendent of Schleswig, contended in

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[31] "Ein evangelischer Hirtenbrief zum Krieg," AELKZ 37 (11 Sept. 1914):867.

[32] In September 1914, the columnist of "Kirchliche Nachrichten - Wochenschau" had expressed the expectation that the current war would be briefer than the 132-day war of 1870/71, "denn den deutschen Belagerungsgeschützen widersteht keine Panzerung und kein Beton." AELKZ 36 (4 Sept. 1914):850. Two months later, the same column attempted to explain how 1914 was different from 1870/71:

> "Ein grosser Teil der Zeitungsleser kann sich noch immer nicht mit der Tatsache abfinden, dass sich dieser Krieg ganz anders abspielt als der von 1870. Man vermisst die schnellen, durchschlagenden Erfolge von weittragender Bedeutung, die jenem Krieg ihr Gepräge gaben, vergisst aber dabei, dass ganz andere Massen im Felde stehen wie damals, dass die Waffen ganz andere sind und die Technik des Krieges sich völlig gewandelt hat. Dass wir ausserdem zeitweilig den Kampf gegen einen numerisch überlegenen Gegner zu führen haben, darf ebenfalls nicht vergessen werden." AELKZ 47 (20 Nov. 1914):1114.

April 1915 that the Frömmigkeit im Felde in the Great War was more profound than that of 1870/71.[33] The 1870/71 experience was criticized for its lack of intensity and passionate hatred of the enemy.[34] The preachers during the Franco-Prussian war were also criticized in the Kirchenzeitung,

> dass da weithin in deutschen Landen auf den Kanzeln während des Krieges gepredigt ist, als hätten wir keinen Krieg. Heute dünkt eine solche Weltfremdheit des Kultus uns wohl allen unmöglich.[35]

Although the images from the Franco-Prussian war were often negative, theologians seemed to find that conflict relevant. Two books from those years, H. Kadelbach's Bilder und Erinnerungen aus dem Kriegsleben von 1870/71, and Pastoralblätter Sonderabdruck von 1870/71 appeared regularly in the book advertisements beginning in August 1914.[36]

The 1813 experience proved to be more valuable than the Franco-Prussian war as a source of images for the theologians during the Great War. The theologians, like other German

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[33] Theodor Kaftan, "Die Frömmigkeit im deutschen Kriegsheer," AELKZ 16 (16 April 1915):369.

[34] "Kriegsbilder aus der Heimat. VI. Aus einer Mittelstadt Thüringens," AELKZ 45 (6 Nov. 1914):1059.

[35] "Was sagt der Krieg nach zweijähriger Dauer für unsere Predigt?," AELKZ 43 (27 Oct. 1916):1023.

[36] See for example AELKZ 23 (14 Aug. 1914):791-2; AELKZ 34 (21 Aug. 1914); AELKZ 35 (28 Aug. 1914):831-2.

intellectuals, regarded the 1813 experience as the penultimate expression of the German Geist. This admiration was articulated especially clearly in the period of the centenary of the Napoleonic Wars and the Wars of Liberation, and a flood of books appeared, elaborating and perpetuating the myth of the Befreiungskriege.[37] That era represented the ultimate mobilization of German energies, the model of unity, devotion and patriotism. By using images from the Wars of Liberation to articulate their perceptions of the First World War, the theologians were paying the highest possible compliment to the significance of their own times.[38]

In 1914, reference to 1813 was made in various contexts, all of them positive. The "Kirchliche Nachrichten - Wochenschau" column used the example of 1813 to encourage determined resistance to the enemy,

> wie unsere Väter vor hundert Jahren durchhielten und den Sieg und die Freiheit erfochten, obwohl Deutschland

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[37]To name a few examples, the following all appeared during the centenary period: Friedrich Meinecke, Leben des Generalfeldmarschalls von Boyen (1896-99), Das Zeitalter der deutschen Erhebung (1906); Theodor Rehtwisch, 1812-1815: Geschichte der Freiheitskriege 1908); Alwin Lonke, Königin Luise von Preussen (1904); Ernst von Meier, Die Reform der Verwaltungsorganisation unter Stein und Hardenberg, hrsg. Friedrich Thimme (1912); Otto Harnack, Wilhelm von Humboldt (1913).

[38]George L. Mosse discusses the importance of the Wars of Liberation to the German political self-consciousness, and describes the images that were associated with the Wars of Liberation: national unity, liberation, the salvation of Germany and heroism, in The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich (New York: Howard Fertig, 1975),17,40-1,43.

damals ein zertretenes und ausgezogenes Land war.[39] Reference was made to the Freiheitskriege to justify hatred towards the enemy,[40] and to provide a precedent for the religious awakening of 1914.[41] Beginning in August 1914, advertisements appeared regularly in the Kirchenzeitung for three books from the Wars of Liberation: Vier Predigten von Friedrich Schleiermacher; F.J. Winter's Geistliche Weckstimmen aus der Zeit der Erniedrigung und Erhebung unseres Volkes; and Paul Kaiser's dramatisches Festspiel from 1813, Für Freiheit und Vaterland.[42]

Throughout World War I, allusions were occasionally made in the Kirchenzeitung to national crises other than those of 1870 and 1813.[43] A book entitled Acht Predigten von Feldprobst D. Fricke aus 1866 appeared among the advertisements on 28 August 1914,[44] and

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[39]"Kirchliche Nachrichten - Wochenschau," AELKZ 39 (25 Sept. 1914):923. By May 1915, however, an A. Schröder in the AELKZ was convinced that the "Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl," the "sittliche ernste Stimmung," and the "wirkliche Willensgesinnung," evident in 1914 surpassed that of 1870 and 1813. "Die Kriegsdichtung unserer Zeit und die Religion" IV, AELKZ 22 (28 May 1915):509.

[40]"Der Hass gegen England," AELKZ 47 (20 Nov. 1914):1112.

[41]Althaus, "Der Krieg und unser Gottesglaube," AELKZ 26 (25 June 1915):605.

[42]See for example AELKZ 32 (7 Aug. 1914):767, and AELKZ 33 (14 Aug. 1914):791-2.

[43]None of the theologians in the Kirchenzeitung, however, drew the parallel Thomas Mann had, to the wars of Frederick the Great. "Friedrich und die Grosse Koalition, Ein Abriss für den Tag und die Stunde," Collected Works, 10:76-134.

[44]AELKZ 35 (28 Aug. 1914):831-2.

remained there for some weeks. As the war stretched into its third year, references to the Thirty Years War began to appear. The images the theologians associated with that war are obvious from an article of November 1916:

> Nach dem Kriege! Wann wird das sein? Wann wird der heissersehnte Augenblick da sein, da wir endlich wie unsere Väter 1648 singen können: Gottlob, nun ist erschollen das edle Fried- und Freudenwort, dass nun mehr ruhen sollen die Spiess und Schwerter und ihr Mord?[45]

Increased interest in the Thirty Years War corresponded with growing war weariness. The first upswing in allusions to the events of 1618 to 1648 occurred simultaneously with a 1916 series of articles looking forward to peace.[46] In 1918, a series of six articles on the Thirty Years War was published, entitled "Das Frömmigkeitsideal im Kirchenlied des Dreissigjährigen Krieges und seine Vorbildlichkeit für die Gegenwart."[47]

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[45] Hoppe, "Die Aufgabe der Kirche nach dem Kriege," AELKZ 46 (17 Nov. 1916):1094.

[46] Titles in this series included "Neuaufbau der Kirche nach dem Kriege," "Die Aufgabe der Kirche nach dem Kriege," and "Nach dem Kriege."

[47] The following excerpt is typical of the parallels the author of this series drew between 1618 to 1648, and 1914 to 1918.

> "Dass der Mensch nichts ist, dass all sein Tun und Machen vergebens ist, diese Gewissheit erfüllt die Männer des Dreissigjährigen Krieges durchaus. Und ebenso haben Millionen deutscher Männer im Granatenfeuer etwas erlebt von dem schlechthinigen Abhängigkeitsgefühl, das zweifellos eine Grundlage aller Religiosität ist." O. Hilbert, "Die Frömmigkeitsideal im Kirchenlied des Dreissigjährigen Krieges und seine Vorbildlichkeit für die Gegenwart" II, AELKZ 24 (14 June 1918):509.

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Historical allusions were less common throughout the 1930s than during World War I. Occasionally 1933 was compared to 1914 as a turning point in German history, but references to 1870 or 1813 were infrequent. Those comparisons which the theologians drew, moreover, were usually unfavorable to the National Socialist regime. A different facet of the "good old days" syndrome was revealed here than in 1914. Instead of referring to history to justify current events and find precedents for their own national crisis, the theologians now viewed the past as somehow purer and more spiritual than their own times. Laible, for example, used his image of the Wars of Liberation to express his misgivings about the national revolution of 1933:

> Als einst die Freiheitskriege kamen, ging eine religiöse Welle durch das Volk.... Man fühlte die Nähe Gottes, Gott kam wieder zu Ehren, der helfende Gott, und man gab ihm die Ehre. Ganz anders die nationale Volkserhebung unter Adolf Hitler. Auch hier gingen Jahre der Knechtschaft voran, auch hier war die Rettung wie ein Wunder; aber nicht Gottes Tun trat in den Vordergrund, sondern das Tun der Menschen.[48]

After war began in 1939, there were a few scattered references to the First World War. The meditation in the first issue after the

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[48]Laible, "Vorwort" III, AELKZ 3 (19 Jan. 1934):50. Laible used a similar contrast to show his disapproval of the "German Christians'" interpretation of the National Socialist revolution as God's revelation:

> "Als Deutschland von dem Joche Napoleons befreit wurde, erkannte man Gottes 'Führung', nach dem Sieg von Sedan schrieb König Wilhelm nach Berlin: 'Welche Wendung durch Gottes Fügung.' Kein Mensch redete von 'Offenbarung'.... In einer irdischen Zeitenwende, und sei sie noch so gewaltig, eine 'Offenbarung' zu sehen, ist Missbrauch des Wortes." "Vorwort" II, AELKZ 2 (8 Jan. 1937):27.

outbreak of war was based on the same text as the 7 August 1914 meditation entitled "Krieg"; "Seid stille und erkennet, dass Ich Gott bin." (Psalm 46:11). It is interesting to compare the mood in which the same person commented on World War I and World War II. In his 1914 meditation, Laible had emphasized the power of God, and his protection of his people. In 1939, he interpreted the war as God's warning to his people to turn from their sins.[49] Studiendirektor Martin Doerne was more explicit about the differences he perceived between 1939 and 1914:

> Beim Anbruch des Weltkrieges, z.B. am Kriegsbettag Anfang August 1914, trat die Volkskirche als Wirklichkeit in Erscheinung. Heute ist von dieser Wirklichkeit nicht mehr viel zu spüren.... Wir können heute nicht mehr predigen, als sähe sich das deutsche Volk in seiner Gesamtheit als ein "Christliches Volk" an.[50]

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[49] Excerpts from these two meditations give some indication of the difference in tone:

> "Wenn schwere Botschaften an ihr Ohr kommen, kommt zugleich die Botschaft mit: Das hat Gott getan, euer Gott, und seine Hände sind allewege Vaterhände.... Eine andere Botschaft kündigt Gott bereits an: 'Ich will Ehre einlegen unter den Völkern. Darum soll auch die Gemeinde noch mitten im Kriege mit dem Lobgesang antworten: 'Der Herr Zebaoth ist mit uns, der Gott Jakobs ist unser Schutz." "Kriege," AELKZ 32 (7 Aug. 1914):745-6.

> "Gott ruft die Menschheit an, ruft sie von ihren Irrwegen zurück, dass sie wieder zu ihm komme; er will sie wieder beten lehren, denn der Krieg lehrt beten.... Die Stimme Gottes im Krieg geht nicht nur an die Welt, vielmehr noch an die Kirche. Sie soll aufwachen zu Gott hin und reinen Tisch zwischen sich und Gott machen." "Gottes Stimme im Krieg," AELKZ 15 (15 Sept. 1939):305-6.

[50] Martin Doerne, "Die Verkündigung der Kirche im Kriege," AELKZ 20 (20 Oct. 1939):359.

No allusions to 1870/71 were made in the Kirchenzeitung in 1939 and 1940, and only infrequent references to the Wars of Liberation can be found.[51] The 8 September 1939 issue, for example, contained an advertisement for F.J. Winter's book, Geistliche Weckstimmen: Zeitpredigten 1813.[52] The advertisement for Winter's book had not reappeared since the First World War, and was not to appear again. The only other references to the Wars of Liberation discussed Ernst Moritz Arndt as the paragon of "manly" Christianity and glowing patriotism.[53]

The paucity of references in the 1930s to past events in German history reflected the misgivings of the theologians about the National Socialist regime. The frequent historical allusions in 1914 had been a product of national pride, an attempt to use images from the past to defend Germany's honor, and encourage support for her cause. In 1933, however, the theologians were less self-confident in their national pride, less willing to endorse the national movement by describing it in terms of images from German history. By 1939, the writings of the theologians were almost completely devoid of pride and self-righteousness.

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[51] For example, a 1913 article by the church historian Albert Hauck, "Die religiöse Erhebung in den Freiheitskriegen," was reprinted in 1938 to commemorate the 125th Gedenktag of the Battle of Leipzig. AELKZ 41 (14 Oct. 1938):890.

[52] This was probably a new edition of the book advertised throughout World War I, Geistliche Weckstimmen aus der Zeit der Erniedrigung und Erhebung unseres Volkes.

[53] P. Ammon, "Arndt's Katechismus für den deutschen Kriegsmann," AELKZ 45 (8 Nov. 1940):494, and "Aus dem Zeitgeschehen," AELKZ 2 (10 Jan. 1941):23.

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The theologians' perceptions of the First World War and the National Socialist revolution were characterized by attempts to create spiritual heroes from national leaders. The theologians projected the virtues they valued onto prominent national figures. In 1914 the Kirchenzeitung praised the Kaiser as a Gottesführer who had helped bring about an increase in prayer and the fear of God in Germany. He was attributed with a pure conscience, righteous piety, and courageous faith in God.[54] Hindenburg too, was repeatedly described as devoutly Christian. In January 1915, for example, the Kirchenzeitung recounted

> wie er im Kreise seiner Familie daheim selbst täglich eine kurze Morgen-und Abendandacht hielt. Auch während des Krieges nimmt er sich täglich Zeit, einen kurzen Abschnitt in der Heiligen Schrift zu lesen.[55]

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[54] "An die Christen in den Deutschland feindlichen und in den neutralen Staaten," AELKZ 44 (30 Oct. 1914):1041; "Worte des Kaisers zum gegenwärtigen Krieg," AELKZ 36 (4 Sept. 1914):847. See also Paul Feine, "Das Kreuz Christi und der Krieg" II, AELKZ 13 (26 March 1915):293. That the Kaiser was somewhat sporadic in his piety is apparent in the changeability of his allegiances. In 1898, he had allegedly proclaimed himself the Protector of the Muslim world, and in a 1915 appeal to the Poles, he claimed the Virgin Mary had appeared to him in a dream. See Hammer, 42, 206.

[55] "Kleine Mitteilungen - Deutschland," AELKZ 3 (22 Jan. 1915): 89. Chancellor Michaelis was also praised for his piety. Upon his appointment, Julius Kaftan wrote to the Kirchenzeitung:

> "Schon lange ruht in dieser schwersten Zeit des deutschen Volkes die Leitung unserer Wehr in den Händen eines bewussten Christen. Jetzt ist auch die Leitung seiner Politik, die mit jedem Tage bedeutungsvoller werdende, in die Hände eines Mannes gelegt, der ein bewusster Christ ist." AELKZ 30 (27 July 1917):711.

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Kirchenzeitung articles from 1933 interpreted even Hitler's rather cursory allusions to God or Providence as evidence of profound piety. Acceptance of the National Socialist regime was much easier when its leader was cast in the role of a deeply religious man. In October 1933, the Kirchenzeitung carried a series of articles entitled "Luther und Hitler." The author, Hans Preuss, a professor of theology at Erlangen, enumerated various similarities between the two deutsche Führer. Both were called by God to save their people, both stemmed from "der primitiven, unverdorbenen Grundlage unseres Volkes, aus dem Bauernstand,"[56] both appeared as public figures while in their thirties. A new invention aided the rise to power of both men: the printing press in Luther's time, and radio in Hitler's time.[57] Preuss had to concede that Hitler rarely mentioned God directly in his speeches, but claimed:

> Manchmal bricht doch seine persönlich Verbundenheit mit dem persönlichen Gott ergreifend heraus.[58]

To illustrate this assertion, Preuss quoted from Hitler's speeches, and concluded:

> Man hat gesagt, das deutsche Volk habe dreimal geliebt: Karl den Grossen, Luther und Friedrich der Grossen. Wir dürfen getrost unsern Volkskanzler hinzufügen. Und das ist wohl die lieblichste Parallele zwischen Martin Luther und Adolf Hitler.[59]

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[56] Actually neither Luther nor Hitler came from the peasantry!

[57] Hans Preuss, "Luther und Hitler," AELKZ 42 (20 Oct. 1933):970-3.

[58] Preuss, AELKZ 43 (27 Oct. 1933):996.

[59] Ibid.,999.

Preuss' series is a blatant example of what some professors and theologians were capable of thinking and saying.[60] Such an example substantiates the observation of Sigmund Freud in 1915:

> The shrewdest persons will all of a sudden behave like imbeciles as soon as the needful insight is confronted by an emotional resistance.[61]

The enthusiasm with which the Kirchenzeitung greeted the birth of the "Third Reich" dissolved rapidly into disillusionment and anxiety about the fate of the church. Disillusionment, however, had also been apparent in the Kirchenzeitung during World War I. The highly extolled religious awakening proved to be evanescent, the unity

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[60] The superintendent of the Leipzig church was as enthusiastic as was Preuss: "Wir schrien nach einem Führer, Gott hat ihn uns geschenkt in Adolf Hitler, dem Manne, der jeden Morgen betet und jeden Abend in seinem Neuen Testament liest." Quoted in "Authentisches aus der ersten Versammlung der sächsischen Pastoren vor ihrem kommissorischen Landesbischof Coch," AELKZ 29/30 (28 July 1933):693. Laible, for his part, compared Hitler with Gideon:

> "Während aber alles noch in Ketten seufzte, hatte Gott sich schon den Mann erkoren, der das deutsche Volk befreien sollte- einen Mann ohne Namen, ohne stolze Sippe, ohne Gunst der Grossen, Adolf Hitler. Man muss an Gideon denken, den der Engel Gottes zum Retter aufrief und der auch weder Ansehen noch Einfluss hatte; aber Gott spricht zu ihm: 'Gehe hin in dieser deiner Kraft, du sollst Israel erlösen.' Und Hitler ging hin in dieser seiner Kraft; er hatte nichts als sein Wort; aber das Wort war stark. ... Auch ein Blinder musste sehen, mit Adolf Hitler war Gott." "Vorwort," AELKZ 1 (5 Jan. 1934):2.

[61] "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death," in Sigmund Freud, Civilisation, War and Death, ed. John Rickman, Psycho-Analytical Epitomes No.4, new and enlarged ed. (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1968),13.

of the fourth of August illusory, and the war dragged on interminably. As early as January 1915, the New Year's editorial asked, "Hüter ist die Nacht schier hin?":

> Fünf Monate liegt die Last des Krieges auf dem Volke, sein Acker ist von Tränen um die Erschlagenen getränkt, das Blutvergiessen erneuert sich täglich, und niemand sieht ein Ende.[62]

Hermann von Bezzel, the president of the Bavarian Oberkonsistorium, deplored the decline of righteousness after six months of war, and remarked that church attendance was again falling. Quoting from Joshua 7:13--the story of Achan--he warned:

> Man kann nicht bestehen vor seinen Feinden, wenn ein Bann unter dem Volk ist. Und Rachsucht, Grausamkeit, unnütze und unnötige Schärfe werden bei der längeren Dauer des Kampfes nicht fern bleiben.[63]

The columnist of "Kirchliche Nachrichten," for his part, blamed the waning enthusiasm on the German government's failure to declare its war aims.[64] An assessment of the situation in early 1918 expressed both nostalgia and pessimism:

> Wäre der Krieg bald zu Ende gegangen, so hätte er einen herrlichen geistlichen Aufschwung hinterlassen--nun drohen die Wässer im Sande zu verlaufen.[65]

The pessimism of the theologians was not ill-founded. Instead of occasioning a long-term religious revival, the war's net result for the church was negative. According to Karl Hammer, over 200,000

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[62] "Vorwort," AELKZ 1 (1 Jan. 1915):1.

[63] Hermann von Bezzel, "Die Pflichten Lutherischen Kirchentums gegenüber der Zeitlage," AELKZ 8 (19 Feb. 1915):173.

[64] "Kirchliche Nachrichten - Wochenschau," AELKZ 14 (7 April 1916):336.

[65] Bernewitz, "Neue Kraft," AELKZ 22 (31 May 1918):466.

people left the church in 1919, and in 1920, the number exceeded 300,000.[66]

The disillusionment which set in almost immediately after the triumphant inception of the National Socialist regime in 1933 was rather different from that of the World War I years. As during the Great War, the theologians in 1933 decried the collapse of the anticipated spiritual revival. Their anxieties, however, were more specific. The main object of concern was the Glaubensbewegung Deutscher Christen. In April 1933, Laible disclosed his alarm at the "German Christians":

> Die "Deutschen Christen" wissen, dass ein grosser Teil des Kirchenvolkes nicht hinter ihm steht. Wo liegt die Differenz? In dem dankbaren, freudigen Bekenntnis zum neuen Reich gewiss nicht; da sind fast alle eins; die noch nicht mittun können, deren Zahl ist gering. Die Differenz liegt nicht auf nationalem, sondern auf religiösem Gebiet. Die Kirche ist gesandt, die Botschaft Gottes in die Nation hineinzutragen, die "Deutschen Christen" wollen die Botschaft der Nation in die Kirche hineintragen. Die Kirche hat Auftrag, Gottes Altar im Volk zu bauen, eine heilige Stätte Gottes für das Volk zu sein; jene wollen den Altar des Volkes in der Kirche bauen, die Kirche säkularisieren.[67]

Despite misgivings about the "German Christians," however, the Kirchenzeitung persisted for some time in attempts to cooperate

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[66] Hammer, 172.

[67] Laible, "'Deutsche Christen' und 'Deutsche Evangelische Reichskirche'," AELKZ 17 (28 April 1933):396.

with them. Excuses were made for their excesses; Laible claimed:

> An ihrem aufrichtigen Willen für Volk und Kirche zweifelt niemand; sie wollen das Beste.[68]

The "Kirchliche Nachrichten" column reported:

> Die "Deutschen Christen" sind bekanntlich nicht einheitlich organisiert; es gibt unter ihnen Kreise, die überlegsam die Dinge anfassen und mit denen sich reden lässt, und andere die mit Husarenritten vorwärtsstürmen.[69]

The columnist's assessment was based on an election proclamation of the "German Christians" in Saxony. This proclamation had explained that the "German Christians" had separated themselves from the "sogenannte Bekenntnisgruppe,"[70] because that group represented a "volks- und weltfremde Theologie," which had, consciously or unconsciously, made one concession after another to "liberalism" and "Marxism." This Bekenntnisgruppe, the statement continued, had failed to fight resolutely for the German people against the Dawes and Young plans.[71] The proclamation emphasized a belief in "Rasse,

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[68] Ibid.

[69] "Kirchliche Nachrichten - Sachsen," AELKZ 24 (16 June 1933):573.

[70] It is not quite clear exactly to whom the Saxon "German Christians" were referring here. The Bekennende Kirche had not yet been established in June 1933. The "German Christians" were talking about the supporters of Bodelschwingh, but whether these supporters were united into a Bekenntnisgruppe in Saxony at this time is uncertain. These early groups which formed in opposition to the "German Christians" helped prepare the way for the emergence of the Confessing Church. See Scholder, 422-52.

[71] "Kirchliche Nachrichten," AELKZ 24 (16 June 1933):574.

Volkstum und Nation" as "Satzungen" and "Aufgaben" from God, and expressed the desire for "heldische Frömmigkeit" in "echt lutherischen Sinne." If these "German Christians" from Saxony represented those "mit denen sich reden lässt," one wonders how radical they would have to be to have been rejected.

In May 1933, Pastor Friedrich von Bodelschwingh was elected to the newly created post of Reichsbischof. The "German Christians," however, refused to accept him, and insisted instead on their candidate, Hitler's Vertrauensmann, Wehrkreispfarrer Ludwig Müller. Even the conciliatory, pusillanimous Kirchenzeitung protested this demand of the "German Christians." Bodelschwingh's election, the Kirchenzeitung insisted, had been "völlig legal," and the "German Christians" had no right to dictate that the Reichsbischof be elected from their ranks.[72] Editor Laible lamented this dissension:

> Während durch das Volk immer neuer Jubel geht, dass die marxistische Herrschaft gebrochen und ein gut deutsches Regiment zur Regierung gekommen ist, ist die Kirche in tiefe Trauer versetzt. Ein wilder Streit ist in ihr ausgebrochen, zwei Fronten stehen sich gegenüber, hier die Front der "Deutschen Christen", dort die andern.[73]

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[72] "Reichskirche und Reichsbischof," AELKZ 22 (2 June 1933): 518. See also AELKZ 24 (16 June 1933):562-5, and Wilhelm Zoellner, "Einige Fragen zum Loccumer Manifest," AELKZ 26 (30 June 1933): 611-14.

[73] Laible, "Die Kirche in Trauer," AELKZ 26 (3o June 1933): 614.

Laible reiterated that only a minority of the Kirchenvolk supported the "German Christians."[74]

It was not only opponents of the "German Christians" who became disillusioned with the shape the anticipated religious revival was taking. In response to the quarrel over the Reichsbischof, Missionsinspektor Weichert resigned from the Reichsleitung of the "German Christians," and later left the movement altogether.[75] In November 1933, 800 Württemberg pastors left the movement in response to the Sportpalast speech of Berlin "German Christian" Gauleiter, Dr. Reinhold Krause.[76] The Tübingen theology professors

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[74]Laible's claim was not borne out by the church elections in July 1933. The "German Christians" won two-thirds of the seats. See Friedrich Zipfel, Kirchenkampf in Deutschland, 1933-1945: Religionsverfolgung und Selbstbehauptung der Kirchen in der nationalsozialistischen Zeit, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin beim Friedrich-Meinecke-Institut der freien Universität Berlin Bd.11 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1965),36.

[75]"Wochenschau," AELKZ 22 (2 June 1933):521; "Kirchliche Nachrichten - Deutschland," AELKZ 23 (9 June 1933):549.

[76]"Kirchliche Nachrichten - Deutschland," AELKZ 47 (24 Nov. 1933):1108. On 13 November 1933, Dr. Krause had addressed a crowd of 20,000 at a "German Christian" rally at the Sportpalast in Berlin. Krause's speech reflected the most radical wing of the "German Christians." His demands included the immediate adoption of the Aryan clause by the church, the repudiation of humility as a Christian virtue, and the advocation of a heroic Jesus figure. Krause rejected the Old Testament as "Ein Buch von Viehjuden und Zuhältern," and urged the "grundsätzlichen Verzicht auf die ganze Sündenbock- und Minderwertigkeitstheologie des Rabbinus Paulus." This speech brought the "German Christians" into an embarrassing situation, as members of the movement as well as its opponents denounced Krause's stance. The Reichsbischof Ludwig Müller was forced to dissociate himself publicly from the movement. See "Die Sportpalastkundgebung der 'Deutschen Christen' und ihre Folge," in Dokumente zu Kirchenpolitik des Dritten: Das Jahr 1933, bearb. Carsten Nicolaisen, hrsg. Georg Kretschmar (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1971),170-5.

Fezer, Weiser, and Rückert dissociated themselves from the group, as did the theology professor Friedrich Gogarten.[77]

Criticism of the "German Christians" and anxiety about the church did not, however, go as far as to condemn National Socialist ideology. This was illustrated in the 1934 "Vorwort," which juxtaposed a vigorous attack on the "German Christians" with glowing praise of the Befreiungsrevolution:

> Ein grosses Jahr steht hinter uns. Gott hatte einen gewaltigen Tag über unser Volk kommen lassen, den niemand geahnt, kaum noch jemand gehofft hätte. Plötzlich hörte man Gottes Schritte durch das Land gehen, hörte seine Sturmglocken läuten; das Volk stand auf, der Sturm brach los. Kein Sturm blutiger Revolution mit Flinten und Henkersbeil, sondern Befreiungsrevolution ohne Blut, Volkserhebung für Freiheit und Vaterland, Zerreissung langjähriger eherner Bande. Die deutsche Geschichte kennt seinesgleichen nicht....
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> Aber das grosse Jahr der deutschen Nation wurde ein kleines Jahr für die Kirche.... Die spätere Geschichtsschreibung wird einen Namen notieren, der wesentlich an der Gestaltung des Kirchenlebens 1933 beteiligt war, die "Glaubensbewegung Deutscher Christen".... Die "Glaubensbewegung Deutscher Christen" brach nicht aus dem Kirchenvolk hervor, sie war künstlich gemacht.... Die "Deutschen Christen" hatten ihre ersten Grundsteine nicht von Gott, sondern von der nationalen Erhebung.... Schon in den Anfängen der "Glaubensbewegung" setzte bei ihr, statt der Gehorsam gegen die Schrift, die Zensur an der Schrift ein.... Das Herz des lutherischen Bekenntnisses, für das die Reformatoren bis auf den Tod kämpften, die "Rechtfertigung aus dem Glauben" ist ausgeschnitten.[78]

This vehement rejection of the "German Christians," whose "theology" stemmed from National Socialist ideology, looks almost courageous. However, it must be borne in mind that the "German

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[77] "Auseinandersetzung in der Bewegung 'Deutscher Christen'," AELKZ 47 (24 Nov. 1933):1126-7.

[78] "Vorwort," AELKZ 1 (5 May 1934):2.

Christians" were safe targets for criticism. The National Socialist government had repeatedly demonstrated its unwillingness to cooperate closely with the "German Christians", or to offer them its unqualified support.[79]

The National Socialist regime itself, however, was not--and by its nature could not be--criticized. The latter had been demonstrated to the Kirchenzeitung when it had been suspended for the first time in 1933. Still, even though one realizes that the Kirchenzeitung had to adhere to "diplomatic" language to continue publication, one gets the impression that many of its contributors, and its editor Wilhelm Laible, were actually sincere in their praise of National Socialism. The Kirchenzeitung's enthusiastic acceptance of the new regime seems to have gone beyond what was necessary, or even reasonable. That enthusiasm can only be explained by the theologians' hostility towards the Weimar Republic, and their attachment to German Nationalist ideology.

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[79] Any institution which demands the loyalty of its adherents is the natural enemy of a totalitarian state, even if that institution, like the "German Christians," tries to incorporate the philosophy of the state. The "German Christians" themselves admitted that they had been rejected by the NS movement. In 1939, the "German Christian" newspaper, Deutscher Sonntag, reported:

> "'Die anfängliche Absicht der "Deutschen Christen", für die rein politische Erweckung auch der kirchlichen Kreise zu wirken, war unausführbar..., da ihnen das Recht dazu bestritten und der Auftrag zurückgezogen wurde, so dass sie gegen ihre ursprüngliche Absicht eine rein religiöse Vereinigung ohne jeden politischen Charakter geworden seien.'"

quoted in "Kirchliche Nachrichten - Deutschland," AELKZ 14 (8 Sept. 1939):302.

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIAN CONCEPTS IN THE SERVICE OF POLITICS

> Dem Vaterland in Treue zugetan allenthalben so, wie es sittlich recht ist, seine Interessen pflegen und letztlich für alles Leben und Wirken kein anderes Ziel kennen als das ewige Reich unseres Herrn Jesu Christi--das steht nicht in Widerspruch miteinander, sondern klingt tief innerlich zusammen; darin wirkt sich aus des Christen rechte Stellung zu seinem Vaterland.
>
> -Julius Kaftan, 1915[1]

> Mit dem Volk hat die Kirche gekämpft und gelitten, als der Weltkrieg ausbrach; mit dem Volk seufzte sie unter der Schmach von Versailles; mit dem Volk jubelte sie, als der Tag der Befreiung kam, und dankte Gott über der Sendung Hitlers. Sie hat vollen Anteil an dem nationalsozialistischen Staat,... nicht gezwungen, sondern "von Herzen, mit gutem Willen."... Mögen einzelne noch abseits stehen (wie auch im Volke selbst) die Kirche als solche hat es hundertfach bezeugt, dass sie sich zu der neuen Zeit halten will und hält.
>
> -Kirchenzeitung, 1934[2]

In both times of crisis, World War I and the National Socialist regime, theological concepts were placed in the service of national goals and values. This was done in several ways. The theologians propounded a religious interpretation of events which lent spiritual significance to governmental policies. They used theological vocabulary to justify both Germany's policies in World War I and the National Socialist revolution of 1933, and, like the historians and other intellectuals, they attempted to

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[1]Julius Kaftan, "Wir Christen und das Vaterland," AELKZ 28 (9 July 1915):656.

[2]"Vorwort" II, AELKZ 2 (12 Jan. 1934):28.

promote unity within, and loyalty to the German nation.

During World War I, the theologians professed that it was not only their desire to interpret events in spiritual terms, it was also their duty. In wartime, a pastor must help his congregation,

> mit dem Kriege und all dem Neuen, das er gebracht, äusserlich und innerlich fertig zu werden, Gott zu erleben, auch und gerade in diesem Krieg.[3]

The war was interpreted as God's action in history, or God's judgment. On the one hand, it was viewed as the fight for Friede und Gehorsam, on the other, as the punishment of Unrecht und Böses.[4] Generally the emphasis depended on whether the theologians were referring to Germany or to her enemies. In the German context, they interpreted the war as a defense of righteousness and Christianity, but when they focussed on their enemies, they viewed the war as a punishment of evil. Thus, in 1914, the Kirchenzeitung described the war as Germany's fight to save Christianity:

> [England] hat einen Bund gemacht mit Heiden und Gottesleugnern, trägt das blutige Schwert des Krieges von Land zu Land und kann nicht satt werden, einzig um ein Christenvolk zu zerstören, dasselbe Volk, dem die Welt des neugeschenkte Evangelium verdankt.[5]

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[3] J. Josten, "Wir Pfarrer und unsere Kriegspredigt," AELKZ 22 (28 May 1915):506.

[4] See "Was sagt Luther über den Krieg?" II, AELKZ 35 (28 Aug. 1914):817.

[5] "Das Völkergericht," AELKZ 49 (4 Dec. 1914):1145.

That same year, however, another article in the Kirchenzeitung had interpreted the war as God's vengeance on Belgium for mistreating the natives of the Congo. "Alle Schuld rächt sich auf Erden, auch die Schuld, an Eingeborenen verübt!"[6]

On the other hand, there were isolated voices, which described the war as a punishment for the sins of the German nation. The parsons Gottfried and his son Ludwig Thimme called it exactly that.[7] A Kirchenzeitung article from September 1914 was somewhat milder, but agreed that Germany too was under God's wrath:

> Der Krieg ist von jeher eine Zuchtrute Gottes für die Völker gewesen. Und hat etwa Deutschland diese Zuchtrute nicht verdient? Hat nicht in der langen Friedenszeit Unglaube, Gottervergessenheit, Materialismus, Mammonsdienst, Genusssucht, Üppigkeit, Unsittlichkeit in weiten Volksschichten in erschreckendem Masse zugenommen?[8]

In the face of unpromising odds, reliance on spiritual interpretations of the war was comforting. When the United States declared war on Germany in April 1917, the Kirchenzeitung confidently retorted:

> Ob unsere Lage noch schwieriger wird, als sie war, steht nicht bei Amerika, sondern bei Gott.[9]

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[6] "Kleine Mitteilungen - Belgien," AELKZ 35 (28 Aug. 1914):829.

[7] The historian Friedrich Thimme criticized his father and brother for their attitude, "dass der Krieg die Strafe Gottes für die Sünde des deutschen Volkes sei," and insisted that the war was not God's "punishment", but his "grace." Friedrich Thimme to Karl Thimme, 15 Nov. 1914, Thimme Nachlass.

[8] Ludwig Schneller, "In Kriegszeiten von Jerusalem bis Cöln," AELKZ 39 (25 Sept. 1914):915.

[9] "Kirchliche Nachrichten," AELKZ 15 (13 April 1917):352.

When peace was signed with Russia at Brest-Litovsk, the Kirchenzeitung assured its readers:

> Was Gott angefangen hat, pflegt er auch zu vollenden; er tut nichts halb. Mit Zuversicht schauen wir auf die bevorstehende Vollendung im Westen; und es dünkt uns wie eine Schändung Gottes, ihm diese Vollendung nicht zuzutrauen.[10]

The theologians' attempts to interpret the crisis in spiritual terms distorted their perceptions of the actual events of the war. Because they understood the war as God's plan for Germany's aggrandizement, the possibility of defeat was rarely entertained.[11] A naive optimism was apparent throughout the wartime issues of the Kirchenzeitung, an optimism which would nowadays be interpreted as sheer hubris:

> Wo sind die Gedanken geblieben, mit denen unsere Feinde in den Krieg zogen? Nicht sie, sondern wir sind heute Sieger. Sieger nicht bloss über die Völker, die seitdem schon ganz aus dem Kriege ausgeschaltet sind, sondern doch auch im tiefsten Grunde bereits, so vertrauen wir, Sieger im Westen.[12]

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[10] "Der Friede mit Russland," AELKZ 11 (15 March 1918):233.

[11] One notable exception was an article by Althaus, "Der Krieg und unser Gottesglaube" II, AELKZ 27 (2 July 1915):631. Even if the war should end in a humiliation of Germany, like that of 1806, Althaus believed Germany's faith in God would not have been in vain:

> "Unser Gottesglaube ist nicht von äusseren Kriegserfolgen abhängig. Und der Sieg als solcher ist kein 'Gottesurteil'."

[12] Ludwig Ihmels, "Zu Beginn des fünften Kriegsjahres," AELKZ 31 (2 Aug. 1918):667.

By August 1918, Germany's military situation was as good as lost. It has to be kept in mind, however, that the vast majority of the nation, including the theologians, did not read the writing on the wall, until the Army Supreme Command requested an immediate armistice, and informed the Reichstag of that decision. The theologians responded with cries for prayers and divine intervention. "An die Beter in Deutschland," an article of October 1918, was typical of the Kirchenzeitung's tone in the last phase of the war.

> Unsere innere und äussere Lage hat sich durch diesen nun vier Jahre tobenden Weltkrieg derart gestaltet, dass nur vereinigtes, verstärktes, haltendes Flehen und Schreien uns helfen kann. Der Herr muss eingreifen und diesem Völkergemetzel ein Ende machen.[13]

The theologians now shifted the focus of responsibility for Germany's future from the army to the home front. If only the spiritual support would hold out, if only the German people would sincerely repent:

> Dann wird Gott sich über uns und unser Volk noch einmal erbarmen.... Er wird uns und unser Volk retten und zu baldigem Sieg und Frieden führen.[14]

Peace without victory still seemed to be incomprehensible!

The increasingly sharper notes from America, however, destroyed the last hopes of the theologians, and they brooded about the collapse of the Second Reich:

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[13] Johannes Seitz, "An die Beter in Deutschland," AELKZ 40 (4 Oct. 1918):873.

[14] Ibid.,875.

> Das Deutschland Bismarcks verschwindet, was kommt ist noch dunkel. Die Entwickelung ist noch beständig im Fluss, und jeder Tag kann Wendungen bringen, die nicht nur über Deutschlands Schicksal, sondern über das Europas entscheiden.[15]

In the midnight hour, the only hope that remained was the theological concept of a miracle:

> Gott ist ein Gott der Wunder.... Das hat er auch in diesem Krieg gezeigt.... Dieser ganze Krieg ist eine Kette von Wundern gewesen. Und auch eine Kette von Überraschungen. Was heute gross erschien, wurde morgen klein, und das Kleine wurde gross. Wissen wir, ob Gott die heute so grosse Macht der Feinde nicht morgen zertrümmern kann?[16]

No miracle occurred. Germany had to surrender and sign the armistice. In November 1918, Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles, a treaty which most of the theologians, like the right-wing political groups, were never willing to accept.[17]

Throughout the war, the theologians had consistently identified faith with public policies, and equated God's will with Germany's cause. When Germany was defeated, however, the

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[15] "Kirchliche Nachrichten - Wochenschau," AELKZ 42 (18 Oct. 1918):921.

[16] Wilhelm Laible, "Bleibt noch eine Hoffnung in dieser schweren Zeit?" AELKZ 43 (25 Oct. 1918):940.

[17] When complaining about the Treaty of Versailles, none of the theologians seem to have looked back at Wilhelm Walther's 1914 article, "Der jetzige Krieg und Dr. Luther" IV, AELKZ 46 (13 Nov. 1914):1080. Walther had declared that it was Christian duty,

> "die Friedensbedingungen so zu fassen, dass eine Wiederkehr eines solchen Krieges, soweit dies überhaupt erreichbar ist, unmöglich gemacht werde. Dies wird aber stets eine Demütigung und Schwächung der Besiegten in sich schliessen, die ihnen sicher nicht wohl, sondern nur 'weh' tun wird, die aber auch für sie selbst die grösste Wohltat sein kann."

association of God's plan and Germany's aggrandizement collapsed. Rather than admitting that their analogy and their theological rationalizations had been wrong, the theologians claimed that defeat indicated that the German people had not had enough faith, or prayed enough. The theologians, seeking a spiritual explanation for defeat, developed what can be called a theological version of the "Stab-in-the-back-myth."[18] Germany, they held, had not been defeated because of military weakness, or economic hardships, but had fallen prey to moral and spiritual degeneration. The early months of the war had shown promise of a return to God, but that opportunity had been wasted. The Kirchenzeitung was filled with this notion throughout November 1918. "Unsere Schuld, unsere Schuld - unsere grosse Schuld" was the title of an article in the 1 November issue.[19] The 8 November issue included an article entitled, "Die erwachende Busspredigt," which gave examples of

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[18]William Pressel traces the German theologians' retreat into the spiritual Dolchstosslegende in Die Kriegspredigt 1914-1918 in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands, Arbeiten zur Pastoraltheologie Bd.5, hrsg. Martin Fischer und Robert Frich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967). Hermann Lübbe describes the attitudes of philosophers towards the Dolchstosslegende. The emphasis in the philosophical approach was different from that of the theological, but the underlying concept was the same: the Germans had lost because they lacked geistige Kraft and moralische Haltung. Politische Philosophie in Deutschland: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte (Basel/Stuttgart: Benno Schwabe & Co., 1963),173-238.

[19]"Unsere Schuld, unsere Schuld - unsere grosse Schuld," AELKZ 44 (1. Nov. 1918):968.

Busspredigten from various religious publications. The Bavarian Korrespondenzblatt, which was cited, gave two answers to the question, "Warum wir nicht siegen können":

> 1. Weil zu wenig gebetet wird.
> 2. Weil wir "keine heiligen Hände aufheben ohne Zorn und Zweifel." (I Tim 2,8)[20]

Ludwig Ihmels, at that time president of the Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Konferenz, declared in an address "An unsere Mitglieder und Freunde und an alle, die die Kirche Jesu und unser Volk lieb haben":

> Unser Volk hat die Stunde seiner Heimsuchung nicht erkannt, und wir sind durch vielfache Versäumnisse mit schuldig geworden. Herr, wir haben es verdient, dass du uns züchtigst, aber um deiner Barmherzigkeit willen verwirf uns noch nicht von deinem Angesicht sondern gib uns Raum zur Busse um Jesu willen.[21]

The retreat into the "stab-in-the-back-myth" allowed the theologians to absolve themselves of responsibility for their attitudes during the war, and to avoid coming to terms with the question of Germany's future. They adopted a detached and persistently critical attitude towards the new republic. They continued

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[20] "Die erwachende Busspredigt," AELKZ 45 (8 Nov. 1918):894.

[21] Ludwig Ihmels, "An unsere Mitglieder und Freunde und an alle, die die Kirche Jesu und unser Volk lieb haben," AELKZ 47 (22 Nov. 1918):1009-10. Some theologians objected to these public proclamations of Germany's sins. Professor Walther warned against speaking in the press in an "unjust" way about the sins of the German Volk,

> "Denn dieses ist schon so grauenvoll von den Feinden verleumdet, dass es ernste Pflicht des deutschen Christen ist, dagegen aufzutreten, nicht aber den Lästerern im Ausland noch neuen Stoff zu liefern." "Zum Erwachen der Busspredigt," AELKZ 48 (29 Nov. 1918):1039.

to live in the realm of nostalgia, to look backwards longingly at the "good old days" of the "authoritarian" Wilhelmine era.

As during the Great War, in 1933, the theologians imposed a religious interpretation on political events. Again, this lent spiritual significance to political decisions and actions, and gave credibility to a regime about which many people had serious doubts. Wilhelm Laible, for example, affirmed in December 1933:

> In der neuen nationalen Erhebung sahen wir von Anfang an eine Führung Gottes und in Adolf Hitler den Mann, den Gott berufen hatte, unserem Volk aus seiner Knechtschaft, aus seiner Gottlosigkeit, Sittenlosigkeit, Zerrissenheit herauszuhelfen.[22]

Even the Kirchenkampf was interpreted as part of God's plan to revitalize the church. In the New Year's message for 1935, Laible called 1934 "eine Gottesjahr ohnegleichen":

> Die Kirche war eine schlafende, eine erschlaffte Kirche geworden; sonst wäre sie nicht so jämmerlich vom Feinde überrannt worden. Da hat Gott sie aufgeweckt, mit dem alten Mittel, mit dem er die seinen aufweckt, mit der Züchtigung, mit dem Kreuz.[23]

When the religious revival which the theologians had expected failed to occur, and instead rapidly turned into an open confrontation between two groups in the church, the Kirchenzeitung interpreted this as a result of moral and Christian failure.

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[22]Laible, "Die Krisis in der 'Glaubensbewegung Deutscher Christen'," AELKZ 50 (15 Dec. 1933):1168.

[23]Laible, "Vorwort" III, AELKZ 3 (18 Jan. 1935):49.

The church, the theologians claimed, had relied too heavily on human forces, and placed too little trust in God. It had succumbed to the temptation of disunity, had misused its energies and neglected to exploit the opportunity for revitalization. Even the politically moderate and theologically conservative Friedrich von Bodelschwingh, who had been Reichsbischof for less than a month before being forced to resign, voiced this attitude of regret and self-chastisement in his March 1934 letter to Pfarrer und Gemeindeglieder.

> Jeder neue Anfang in der Kirche wächst aus der Busse heraus. Wer unter uns müsste nicht bekennen, dass er noch viel zu wenig still und frei, treu und tapfer gewesen ist! Eine grosse Zeit fand bei uns viele kleine Männer.[24]

Many churchmen, like Bodelschwingh, were profoundly sincere in their attempts to cope with the turmoil in the church and the German nation in a non-political and purely Christian way. The tragedy of the situation, however, was that often their introspection and spiritual focus in the early stages of the church struggle prevented them from fully recognizing the threat that a totalitarian regime represented to organized religion. They tended instead to blame spiritual short-comings for the weakness and dissension within the church.

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[24]Pastor von Bodelschwingh later proved to be a courageous proponent of ecclesiastical independence. Although he was reluctant to involve himself politically, he refused to accept any adaptation of Christian beliefs or church policies to suit National Socialism. He described himself in May 1933 in the following terms: "'Ich gehöre',... 'weder zu den Deutschen Christen, noch zur nationalsozialistischen Partei und würde keine Möglichkeit sehen, nach dieser Seite hin eine äussere oder innere Tätigkeit zu übernehmen.'" Quoted in Scholder, 414. During the war years, Bodelschwingh was a

The Kirchenzeitung consistently maintained that political conditions were not to blame for the disastrous state of ecclesiastical affairs:

> Die Kirche hat selbst Hand an sich gelegt; sie machte aus dem Kirchenfeld einen Kampfplatz, zwei wider drei und drei wider zwei.... Immer deutlicher wird die Ohnmacht der Menschen den Frieden zu schaffen; immer majestätischer tritt die Gestalt Christi hervor.... Wenn der heutige Kirchenbau nicht geraten ist, kann man vor Menschen allerlei Gründe angeben. Vor Gott ist nur die eine Antwort möglich: der Herr war nicht dabei.[25]

By late 1933, the church was sharply divided. Plans to unite the twenty-eight Landeskirchen into a national Deutsche Evangelische Kirche had resulted in the drafting of a constitution, which was adopted in July 1933. However, this semblance of unity was soon shattered. Opponents of the "German Christians" and their plans for the Reichskirche resented the attempts of that group to impose their dogmas onto the church. The quarrel over the Reichsbischof and the debate over the imposition of the Aryan Clause led to a complete split between the two factions. On the one hand, there were the "German Christians," on the other their opponents, the Bekenntnistreue groups. Many theologians, however, representing a wide range of theological positions, were caught in the middle between these two opposing fronts.[26]

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prominent opponent of the euthanasia program of the National Socialists. See Stewart Hermann, The Rebirth of the German Church (London: S.C.M. Press, 1946),71. He refused to comply with orders in this regard, and did not release any of the patients in his hospital to the authorities.

[25]"Vorwort," AELKZ 1 (4 Jan. 1935):2-4.

[26]In 1937, 160 of the Berlin clergy belonged to the Confessing Church, 40 were "German Christians," and 200 considered themselves to be in this middle group. Hans Rothfels, The German Opposition to Hitler: An Appraisal, trans. Lawrence Wilson (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co, 1963),41.

Unwilling to commit themselves to either faction, these churchmen formed the "middle front" in the Kirchenkampf.

While the "German Christians" began to lose ground in late 1933, due to the Sportpalast scandal and the break of Reichsbischof Ludwig Müller with their group, their opponents began to organize. The Jungreformatorische Bewegung, led by Martin Niemöller, Walter Künneth and Hans Lilje, insisted that "church must remain church,"[27] and offered an early center of opposition to attempts to impose National Socialist ideology on the church. In September 1933, Niemöller initiated the Pfarrernotbund, to protect those pastors who were victimized by persecution of non-Aryans, or who had been dismissed from their offices by the new official church. By 1934, over one-third of all German clergymen were members of this association.[28]

At the synods of Barmen and Dahlem in May and October 1934, many of the Protestants who opposed the "German Christians" and the Deutsche Evangelische Kirche united to form the Bekennende Kirche. Many of the theologians who wrote in the Kirchenzeitung, however, did not join this new group, despite their disapproval of the "German Christians". Laible, for example, although he shared some of the concerns of the Confessing Church, was openly critical of it, and blamed it for exacerbating disunity in the church:

> Es waren Gnadenstunden, als jene grosse Bewegung in der Kirche aufbrach, eine Bewegung um Gott her und sein Wort:

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[27] See Kupisch, 258.

[28] Gutteridge, 101.

> als man sich gegen die Irrlehre aufraffte und sich einmütig auf das Evangelium stellte.... Aber man liess sich damit nicht genügen, man wollte Kirche bauen, eine neue Kirche; man machte den Barmer Tag zu einem Kirchentag, richtete ein neues "Bekenntnis" auf in der "Barmer theologischen Erklärung."... Aber...Gott hatte schon gebaut, eine lutherische Kirche, eine reformierte Kirche, dazu dann der Union.... Es lag nahe, diese Kirchen unter ein Dach zu bringen, das versuchte auch die Barmer Erklärung.... Aber dieses Dach was schon da, man hatte sich wirklich zusammengefunden, um "gemeinsam zu schlagen." Weiter zu gehen, dazu fehlte der göttliche Auftrag, vollends fehlte er zu einem neuen Bekenntnis.[29]

Like the theologians who contributed to the Kirchenzeitung, the leaders of the Confessing Church were concerned primarily with the internal ecclesiastical crisis, and the heresy of the "German Christians." True to the teachings of Paul, they maintained their loyalty to the state. While many of them showed great courage in resisting the encroachment of the "German Christians" and the pressure of National Socialist agencies, they did not directly attack the NS regime, either because they could not, or did not wish to do so.[30]

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[29]Laible, "Vorwort" III, AELKZ 3 (15 Jan. 1937):50-1. Wilhelm Zoellner, president of the Deutsche Evangelische Kirchenausschuss, described himself vis-à-vis the Kirchenkampf as "einer, der zwischen den Parteien 'in der Drecklinie' steht." Zoellner admitted, however, that those theologians, like himself, who stood in the middle, were largely responsible for the influence the "German Christians" had won in the church.

> "Als die evangelische Kirche der Front des individualistischen Idealismus gegenüberstand, entstand eine Kompromissbewegung, welche zwischen den beiden ungeheuren Gegensätzen vermitteln wollte. Gewiss wollte sie die Kirche retten, aber sie sah nicht, dass sie gerade es war, welche die Kirche dem Einfluss des individualistischen Idealismus auslieferte."

"Die kirchlichen Kampffronten von Bekenntnis aus gesehen," AELKZ 22 (1 June 1934):506.

[30]There were, of course, exceptions. The most notable was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the pastor and theological writer who was executed in 1945 for his involvement in the attempted putsch of 20 July 1944. Bonhoeffer, however, was not typical of the clergy of the Confessing Church. See Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer: An Illustrated Introduction in Documents and Photographs, trans. Rosaleen Ockenden (London: William Collins & Co., 1976), 92-140.

On the contrary, they repeatedly stressed their loyalty to the state.[31] Even at his trial in 1938, Martin Niemöller emphasized his wish not to interfere in political affairs.[32] Despite these objections, however, the Confessing Church inevitably became a form of resistance to the National Socialist regime. Its services drew large crowds, not only because of the spiritual vitality of the new church, but also because it was the only institution to which Protestants could belong which was outside the control of the National Socialists. It thus became an expression of opposition for many for whom resistance in other forms was not possible, or not desirable. Moreover, the imperatives of the theology of the Confessing Church brought it into conflict with the National Socialist regime. Its affirmation of a confession of faith based firmly on the gospel meant that it rejected the totalitarian claims of Hitler's government. It denied any distortion of Christianity in conformity with racial dogma, and repudiated the deification of Hitler, and the chauvinistic glorification of the German Volk. Thus, although the Confessing Church had not wished to become a form of political resistance, it could not help but do so.

In the national crises of 1914 and 1933, the theologians were inclined to identify God with the German cause. This was

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[31] Gutteridge, 129-31; Conway, 84-7.

[32] Gutteridge, 103.

nothing less than a manipulation of religious concepts in the service of political goals. Such theological maneuvering, however, was not unique to 1914 or 1933. According to Karl Barth, the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher had already exemplified such manipulation of theology a century earlier:

> As an apologist of Christianity, Schleiermacher really played upon it as a virtuoso plays upon his fiddle: he played the notes and airs which, if they did not cause his hearers to rejoice, could at least be acceptable to them. Schleiermacher did not speak as a responsible servant of Christianity but, like a true virtuoso, as a free master of it.[33]

The Protestant theologians during World War I showed themselves worthy heirs of Schleiermacher in their prowess as "virtuosos" of Christianity. Barth criticized them even more harshly than he had Schleiermacher. "The German Professors," he wrote to a friend, "are real masters at finding ingenious moral and Christian grounds for brutality."[34]

Charles Bailey excuses the chauvinism of the World War I theologians by calling it "simply the normal response of state employees."[35] University teachers were required to swear not to "write, do, or say anything subversive to the interests of sovereign or state."[36] It is, however, a far cry from refraining from

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[33]Barth, Protestant Theology,446.

[34]Edmund Busch, Karl Barth: His Life from Letters & Autobiographical Texts, trans. John Bowden II, rev. ed. (London: SCM Press, 1976),148.

[35]Charles Edward Bailey, Gott mit uns: Germany's Protestant Theologians in the First World War (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1978),460.

[36]Ibid.,40.

involvement in subversive activities to enthusiastically and wholeheartedly subordinating intellectual and theological integrity to the defense of national interests. There is no evidence that church leaders and university professors jeopardized their lives, or even their careers, if they refused to participate in the theological rationalization of Germany's foreign policy during the Great War. The Marburg theologian, Martin Rade, for example, who had described the war as evidence of the "bankruptcy of Christianity," and had conceded that Germany shared in the responsibility for it, was severely criticized by his colleagues,[37] but maintained his position at the University of Marburg until 1933, and continued publishing his journal Christliche Welt, throughout the war.[38]

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[37]Hammer,58. The liberal theologian Martin Rade (1857-1940) was profoundly influenced by Adolf von Harnack. Rade founded the periodical Christliche Welt in 1886. Under his leadership, it became the most important forum for the opinions of German liberal theologians. Politically, Rade was also a liberal, and between 1919 and 1921, he was a representative at the Prussian Verfassungsgebende Versammlung. In 1933, he was dismissed from the Staatsdienst and left the University of Marburg. Rade rejected National Socialism from the start, as incompatible with Christian ethics. See Hammer,376 and Scholder,181.

[38]The only evidence in the Kirchenzeitung during World War I of a churchman being censured for voicing "subversive" opinions was a report in November 1914. Apparently, a Pastor Frank in West Prussia had warned his congregation that the blood of innocent women and children was on German swords. When called to task for this statement, Frank explained that he had not meant to provoke his listeners, only to urge them to repent. He was condemned by the zuständige Kriegsgericht to six months imprisonment. The Kirchenzeitung expressed horror at Frank's behavior: "[Frank] hat...sowohl seiner Gemeinschaft als dem Christentum den schlechtesten Dienst getan." "Kleine Mitteilungen - Westpreussen," AELKZ 47 (20 Nov. 1914):1115.

The Kirchenzeitung bears witness to the propensity of the theologians during World War I to use their prestige to justify German policy, to Christians inside as well as outside Germany. The most famous appeal of German Protestant theologians, "An die evangelischen Christen im Auslande," appeared in the Kirchenzeitung on 4 September 1914. It was printed with the names of the twenty-nine signatories, among them K. Axenfeld, Missionsdirektor, Berlin; H.v.Bezzel, Oberkonsistorialpräsident, Munich; E. Dryander, Oberhofprediger, Berlin; Adolf v.Harnack, Professor of Theology, Berlin; and Julius Richter, Professor of Theology, Berlin. The appeal opened by deploring the effects of the war on Christian missionary work:

> In dem unvergleichlichen weltgeschichtlichen Zeitabschnitt, in dem der Christenheit die Brücke zu der gesamten nicht-christlichen Menschheit geschlagen und ein massgebender Einfluss auf sie anvertraut war, stehen die christlichen Völker Europas im Begriff, in brudermörderlichem Kriege sich gegenseitig zu zerfleischen.[39]

It one-sidedly placed the blame for the collapse of Christian unity on the shoulders of Germany's political enemies. The appeal denounced the "deliberate network of lies" which sought to blame the outbreak of war on the German government and the German people. Germany, it proclaimed, had been forced to declare war in order to defend herself from destruction by "Asian barbarism." The Czar had publicly declared the war to be the Entscheidungskampf against Germany and Protestantism. The damage which the war would wreak in the Protestant mission fields was presented as evidence of the severity of that

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[39] AELKZ 36 (4 Sept. 1914):842-4.

threat:

> Nicht um unseres Volkes willen, dessen Schwert blank und scharf ist--um der einzigartigen Weltaufgabe der Christlichen Völker in der Entscheidungsstunde der Weltmission willen wenden wir uns an die evangelischen Christen im neutralen und im feindlichen Auslande.

The Appeal ended with an eloquent defense of Germany's innocence. Responsibility for the terrible crime of the war lay, not with Germany, it proclaimed, but with those who had plotted against her, and were bent on her destruction.

In October 1914, the Kirchenzeitung printed a letter from Adolf von Harnack to an English theologian. Normally, the Kirchenzeitung was antagonistic to Harnack's liberal theology, but in 1914, Harnack's sentiments corresponded exactly with those of the orthodox Kirchenzeitung theologians. Harnack represented Germany as the protector of Kultur:

> [England] reisst den Damm ein, der Westeuropa und seine Kultur vor dem Wüstensande der asiatischen Unkultur Russlands und des Panslawismus geschützt hat.[40]

It was crucial to the fate of the world, Harnack claimed, that Germany stand firm,

> denn wir verteidigen die Arbeit von anderthalb Jahrtausenden für ganz Europa und auch für Grossbritannien!

Harnack dismissed Germany's violation of Belgian neutrality as an act of necessity, and rejected Bethmann Hollweg's admission that Germany had committed a certain Unrecht:

> Wir waren in einer Lage, in der es überhaupt Formalien nicht mehr gibt, sondern nur noch sittliche Pflichten.

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[40] "Eine Auseinderandersetzung deutscher Gelehrten mit England," AELKZ 40 (2 Oct. 1914):944-5.

There was a biblical precedent, Harnack added; David, in extreme hunger, had eaten the consecrated showbread from the tabernacle.[41]

Often the theologians used Martin Luther's teachings to justify Germany's policy in the war.[42] In a book entitled Deutschlands Schwert durch Luther geweiht, Professor Wilhelm Walther applied Luther's Kriegstheologie to the contemporary situation, to demonstrate the righteousness of Germany's cause. Luther, in the tradition of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, had focussed his discussion of war on the notion of "just war." He had defined "just war" as defensive war. Walther broadened Luther's definition of "just war" to include preventive wars, in which what appeared to be acts of aggression were actually defensive measures. The central question, Walther contended, was "ob man durch 'Lust' oder durch 'Not' zum Kriege getrieben wird, nicht...wer den Krieg erklärt oder wer mobilisiert hat."[43] According to this analysis, Germany's preparations for war had not only been necessary defensive measures, they were moreover heilige Pflicht.

The theologians frequently argued that the war was a confirmation, rather than a denial of Christian love. Ludwig Ihmels, in his book, Der Krieg im Lichte der christlichen Ethik, explained

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[41] See 1 Sam.21:6; Matt.12:4; Mark 2:26; and Luke 6:4.

[42] The writings of Luther most frequently referred to were: "Von weltlicher Obrigkeit, wie weit man ihr Gehorsam schuldig sei," "Ob Kriegsleute auch in seligem Stande sein können," and "Vom Kriege wider die Türken."

[43] Walther, "Der jetzige Krieg und Dr. Luther" II, AELKZ 43 (23 Oct. 1914):1010. Walther's series was published separately under the title given above.

that war did not contradict Jesus' commandment, "Love thy enemy." The possibility for individual acts of love still existed, and moreover, the war itself showed love to the enemy, since a "just war" served both sides, by combatting evil. Anger against the enemy was necessary, but anger did not rule out love.[44]

Although it is difficult to comprehend now, the theologians seem to have been unconscious of their blatant misuse of theology as a means of legitimizing the war effort. However, some of their contemporaries were more astute. For Karl Barth, the German theologians' reaction to the war brought shock and disillusionment. In retrospect, Barth described their "ethical failure" in the face of war as the impulse which led him to question their entire theology.

> A whole world of exegesis, ethics, dogmatics, and preaching, which I had hitherto held to be essentially trustworthy, was shaken to the foundations, and with it, all the other writings of the German theologians.[45]

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[44]Ihmels' book was reviewed by Laible in "Die Bergpredigt und der Krieg," AELKZ 50 (10 Dec. 1915):1192-5. Laible's review included a comment from the American Baptist theological quarterly, Review and Expositor. Regarding Ihmels' book, that journal had exclaimed:

> "'Die geschickte Art, mit der er das moralische Urteil verwirrt muss diabolisch genannt werden.'"

Laible's response was:

> "Wenn die Freunde Englands etwas 'teuflisch' heissen, muss es gut sein."

[45]Busch,81. See also "The Humanity of God," in Karl Barth, God, Grace and Gospel, trans. James Strathearn McNab, Scottish Journal of Theology Occasional Papers no.8, rep. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1966),34.

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In the same way, theology was used in 1933 to justify political and national goals. The theologians who wrote in the Kirchenzeitung had never attempted to conceal their hostility towards the Weimar Republic. Many Protestant theologians, at heart German Nationalists, welcomed Weimar's demise. Triumphantly, the Kirchenzeitung commented on the elections of 5 March 1933:

> Die Mehrheit des deutschen Volkes hat sich zu den vorbereitenden Ereignissen der letzten Monate bekannt: zur Beseitigung der schwarz-roten Parteiherrschaft in Preussen und anderen Ländern, zu der Schliessung des Bundes vor allem zwischen Hindenburg und der nationalen Bewegung.... Mit dem demokratischen Wahlrecht der Erde wurde die Demokratie in ihrer bisherigen Form erschlagen. Wie immer auch die weitere Entwicklung gehen möge, das eine ist sicher: der Staat von Weimar kehrt nicht wieder.[46]

The theologians phrased their complaints about Weimar in the clichés of the German Nationalists, and identified the interests of the church with those of the nationalist opponents of Weimar. Studiendirektor Martin Doerne acknowledged that the Lutheran church had resisted the Weimar Republic and contributed to its termination. According to Doerne,[47] the internal structure of the church had changed little during the Weimar years:

> Das Ja zur Nation, die Hinneigung zur Idee eines starken Nationalstaates dürfte innerhalb unserer Kirche durch die gegensätzliche Berührung mit dem liberal-demokratischen Weimarer Staat noch vertieft und befördert worden sein. Die liberale und Sozialdemokratische Presse mit ihrem

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[46] "Wochenschau," AELKZ 10 (10 March 1933):233.

[47] Martin Doerne was later involved in the Jungreformatorische Bewegung which opposed the "German Christians." Doerne's signature appears on the 9 May 1933 Aufruf of the Jungreformatorische Bewegung. See Kupisch, 256-60.

> Schelt- und Klageruf über die "reaktionäre Kirche" hat diese Zusammenhänge in ihrer Weise wohl richtiger gesehen als das offizielle Kirchentum mit seinen vorsichtigen "Neutralitäts-Parolen" sie sehen wollte. Die Sympathie mit dem Staat der Wilhelminischen Zeit, das Heimweh nach dem Phantom einer "guten alten" Zeit hat in breiten kirchlichen Kreisen dabei gewiss auch eine nicht zu unterschätzende Rolle gespielt.[48]

Theology had been used, not only to justify hostility towards the Weimar Republic, but also to support the national revolution and the new National Socialist regime. The Reichstag fire, for example, was welcomed by the Kirchenzeitung:

> Es musste vielleicht dieses Flammenzeichen von eindrucksvollster Kraft kommen, um vielen unserer Zeitgenossen innerhalb und ausserhalb der deutschen Grenzen die Augen zu öffnen über den ganzen Ernst der Zeit, die wir gegenwärtig durchleben.... Allzu leicht sah man hinweg über die unheimlichen Bewegungen und Bestrebungen, die sich im Untergrunde unseres Volkstums abspielen, ja die weit darüber hinaus die Völker der Erde unterminieren.[49]

Württemberg Kirchenpräsident Wurm's public endorsement of the National Socialist government in March 1933 was a prime example of a theologian using his influence to generate support for the new regime. Wurm praised the National Socialists for surmounting class

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[48] Martin Doerne, "Die Kirche vor dem Anspruch der Nation," AELKZ 25 (23 June 1933):582. Doerne's statement is substantiated repeatedly in the Kirchenzeitung. The "Wochenschau" column in April 1933, for example, described the Weimar Republic in the following terms:

> "Den Mächten, die den Umsturz von 1918 herbeiführten und die später den Staat von Weimar trugen, wohnte ausserordentlich geringe schöpferische Kraft inne. Sie waren gross im Verneinen gegen die Monarchie, gegen den 'Militarismus', gegen den 'Obrigkeitsstaat', gegen den christlichen Einfluss in Staat und Schule." AELKZ 15 (14 April 1933):353.

[49] "Wochenschau," AELKZ 9 (3 March 1933):210.

barriers and saving Germany from the "immer drohender werdende Gefahr einer Bolschewisierung des deutschen Volkes."[50] He commended the movement for recognizing that the decline of Germany had not been caused by political and economic factors alone, but was the result of a materialistic, "decadent" worldview.

The theologians in 1933 expressed their patriotism by heatedly denying foreign charges against Germany, as they had done in 1914. The theme of "unjust" and "untrue" Propaganda im Auslande began to recur frequently in the pages of the Kirchenzeitung.[51] In April 1933, Ihmels, then president of the Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Konferenz, sent a telegram to the president of the Worldwide Lutheran Assembly in New York, requesting his intervention against "die jüngsten Greuellügen die im Ausland über Deutschland verbreitet werden."[52] Two months later, the Kirchenzeitung complained that eine gewisse Weltpresse was spreading lies, calling the Germans "Huns and Barbarians," and claiming that they were slaughtering Jews and Poles, and starving prisoners to death in concentration camps.[53]

Even the Confessing Church, after its establishment in 1934, protested against the foreign press. Foreign coverage of the Kirchenkampf brought the leaders of the Confessing Church into

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[50]Wurm's statement is quoted in "Kirchliche Nachrichten - Württemberg," AELKZ 12 (24 March 1933):284. As mentioned above, Wurm soon changed his mind about the National Socialists.

[51]See for example, "Wochenschau," AELKZ 13 (31 March 1933):305.

[52]"Kirchliche Nachrichten - Allgemeines," AELKZ 14 (7 April 1933):331. The allegations Ihmels was complaining about were charges of Jewish persecution.

[53]"Kirchliche Nachrichten," AELKZ 25 (23 June 1933):594.

embarrassment, as it frequently represented them as opponents of National Socialism. To refute the impression created by these accounts of the Confessing Church, churchmen such as Martin Niemöller repeatedly emphasized their loyalty to the state. In early 1935, the Bekenntnisgemeinschaft sent a statement to the foreign press protesting:

> Oft haben ausländische Zeitungen den ganzen Prozess der kirchlichen Neuordung dadurch in ein durchaus falsches Licht gebracht, dass sie den Widerstand gegen das deutsch christliche Kirchenregiment als einen solchen gegen den nationalsozialisten Staat, also gewissermassen als eine Aktion mit Hintergründen verstanden und als solchen wenigstens mit eindeutigen Strichen zu charakterisieren versuchen.[54]

It is difficult to determine to what extent a protest such as this one was motivated by patriotism, and to what extent by the desire for self-preservation.

When war broke out in 1939 the Kirchenzeitung adopted a very different stance than it had in 1914 or 1933. Instead of reports on the military situation, glowing testimonies of loyalty, and justifications of Germany's conduct based on biblical sources or Luther's teachings, there was a conspicuous silence. The war was scarcely mentioned, and when it was, then usually only in a detached, factual manner. The issues of November 1939, for example, contained no articles relating to the war, except some brief discussions of Polish atrocities. The paper became increasingly smaller. The 12 January 1940 issue was only four pages long and contained no war news or commentary. The Kirchenzeitung's diminishing size was

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[54] Dr. W., "Ein Wort an die Auslandspresse," AELKZ 4 (25 Jan. 1935):89.

possibly the only form of protest available in the face of strict censorship.[55] The theologians were not permitted to criticize the government or the war effort, and since most of them by 1939 refused to glorify the regime, silence was the only option.

Occasionally, wholehearted endorsements of the war effort reminiscent of 1914 appeared, but they were usally part of the column "Aus dem Zeitgeschehen," or were authored by Professor Bergdolt.[56] The column "Aus dem Zeitgeschehen" gives every indication of having been written by a non-theologian; it presented consistently the National Socialist line, and dealt mostly with political and military affairs. As for Bergdolt, he had been Laible's "editorial assistant" since 1939. Next to his name in each issue's staff list was the comment: "Für den gesamten Inhalt verantwortlich." His articles indicate that he was a staunch Nazi.

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[55] By 1939, the paper was severely restricted in its freedom of expression. The state's oppression of the church was described by members of the Confessing Church in "Die Denkschrift der Vorläufigen Kirchenleitung gegen den 'Totalitätsanspruch des Staates" from May 1936. Several of the measures outlined affected religious publications. In November 1934, for example, the Reichminister of the Interior had forbidden the publication of material dealing with ecclesiastical matters--ie., the Kirchenkampf. The authors of the "Denkschrift" also complained about the Entchristlichung of public life, which sought to remove Christian influence from radio and press. In July 1940, pastors were forbidden to distribute confessional literature to soldiers. Also in 1940, Goebbels banned religious and confessional questions from public discussion. Hermelink, 348-50,506-7. Given all these restrictions, it is surprising the Kirchenzeitung even managed to stretch over four pages in 1940.

[56] See for example "Kriegs-Neujahr 1940," AELKZ 1 (5 Jan. 1940):1, and Bergdolt's series entitled "Plutokratie und Christentum," for example, part II, AELKZ 17 (26 April 1940):180.

The Kirchenzeitung's reticence on the subject of the war reflected both censorship, and the uneasiness of the theologians with the situation in 1939. In his article, "Mit gutem Gewissen," Laible expressed an anxious thoughtfulness that was very different from the confused emotionalism characteristic of the theologians' responses in 1914 and 1933:

> Was sollen wir predigen, was dürfen wir predigen, um vor Gott und Menschen zu bestehen? Es gibt nur eine Antwort; Bei Gottes Wort bleiben.... Es wäre noch manches zu sagen, wie weit die Boten Gottes reden und wie weit sie schweigen sollen. Denn--das vergesse man nicht--es gibt auch einen schweigenden Dienst Gottes.... Das an Gottes Wort geschulte Gewissen wird das Recht treffen, das rechte Zeugnis vom Evangelium und das rechte Zeugnis gegen die Sünde. Was wir oben gesagt von dem Vorbild Jesu [before Pilate] und des Apostels Paulus [in Ephesus], mag vielleicht manchem zur Klärung dienen, damit die Diener Christi mit gutem Gewissen und in aller Freudigkeit ihres Amtes warten, mit gutem Gewissen "gegen Gott und die Menschen."[57]

In both 1914 and 1933, one of the goals of the theologians was to promote unity among the German people. To this end, they continually sacrificed their theological integrity, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously. The events of both 1914 and 1933 were welcomed as the much-needed, long-awaited unifying force, which would overcome dissension and weld Germans into one powerful will.

The unity which the theologians perceived in 1914 was symbolized in their minds by the "spirit of August 1914." That myth of the Burgfriede became a prevalent theme cultivated and cherished by the theologians as well as by other intellectuals. The theologians

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[57] AELKZ 9 (1 March 1940):94.

developed their own version of the Burgfriede in a theological context.[58] To them, it meant setting aside theological differences and joining forces to defend Germany's honor. In 1951, for example, the theologian Theodor Kaftan criticized "modern theology," but refused to name the theologians to whom he was referring, "denn wir wollen, so viel an uns ist, den Burgfrieden zu wahren suchen."[59]

The international nature of Christianity was altogether refuted in the interest of German unity. Pastor Heinrich Rendtorff[60] expressed this in his denunciation of attempts at worldwide cooperation among Protestants in the interest of peace. The unity of the Christian church, Rendtorff claimed, was irrelevant and impotent in the face of war. England had mobilized the world against Germany, the English press had propagated lies about Germany, and English Christians had revealed that they were hypocrites:

> Und wir sollten ihnen die Hand reichen, als stünde nichts zwischen uns? Oder wäre es wirklich möglich,... die Schuldfrage auszuschalten?... Es ist die Sünde der evangelischen Christen Englands und Frankreichs, dass sie der Lüge mehr Gehör geben als der auch ihnen sattsam bekannt gewordenen Wahrheit. Und es ist das Recht und die Gewissenspflicht der evangelischen Christen Deutschlands, ihnen zu sagen: solange diese Lüge zwischen uns steht, fällt unsere Gemeinschaft durch eure Schuld dahin.[61]

In spite of Rendtorff's declaration that the unity of the

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[58]The historians were also active in attempts to promote unity in their own way. See, for example, Friedrich Thimme, hrsg. Vom inneren Frieden des deutschen Volkes: Ein Buch gegenseitigen Verstehens und Vertrauens, 2 vols. (Leipzig: G. Hirzel, 1916).

[59]Kaftan, "Die Frömmigkeit im deutschen Kriegsheer," AELKZ 16 (16 April 1915):370.

[60]Rendtorff later became the Landesbischof of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and a "German Christian."

[61]"Der Krieg und die Einheit der Kirche Christi," AELKZ 11 (12 March 1915):254.

Christian church was irrelevant in wartime, the Kirchenzeitung nevertheless marvelled at the solidarity of the worldwide Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Konferenz:

> Es ist ein wundersames Schauspiel die Haltung der Lutheraner in der Welt zu diesem Weltkrieg zu beobachten.[62]

The Kirchenzeitung praised the American Lutherans for combatting the English Lügenpresse and protesting United States arms sales to England and France, and commended the loyalty of the Russian and Swedish Lutherans to the German cause.

As in 1914, there are many instances of calls for unity in the 1933 issues of the Kirchenzeitung. It was a favorite theme of Wilhelm Laible's and he repeatedly issued his plea for solidarity and conciliation within the church, even if it meant compromising certain values and cooperating with the "German Christians." In an article in May 1933, he adopted the role of mediator in the church struggle, and made two requests:

> Die erste an die "Deutschen Christen". Sie sind Kampfnaturen, zum Kampf gerüstet, so soll es auch sein. Aber sie möchten auch zusehen, dass sie nicht Verbitterung und Zertrennung unter denen erreichten, die doch vereint werden sollen.... Die zweite Bitte an die übrigen Christen: "Lass nicht Zank sein zwischen mir und dir." Es ist verständlich, wenn viele die Zeit nicht aufnehmen können, wenn sie von dem mancherlei Ungeistlichen und Gewalttätigen der Zeiterscheinungen nicht loskommen. Aber darf das Anlass sein, dass Brüder sich entfremden, die doch einen Herrn, einen Glauben, eine Taufe, einen Gott und Vater haben?[63]

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[62] "Die Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Konferenz im Krieg," AELKZ 32 (6 Aug. 1915):761.

[63] Laible, "Das Verlangen nach einer evangelischen Reichskirche," AELKZ 20 (19 May 1933):468.

Even after the victory of the "German Christians" in the July 1933 church elections, Laible continued to call for unity. "Zusammenarbeiten, nicht auseinander gehen!", he urged:

> Dass schliesslich die Anführungszeichen bei dem Wort "Deutsche Christen" verschwinden, weil alle sich als Deutsche Christen zusammengefunden haben.
>
> Sobald wir uns die Hände reichen, hat der Vorstoss der "Deutschen Christen" keine Angriffsfläche mehr.... Gottlosigkeit und Liberalismus haben nicht nur das Staatsleben überschwemmt, auch das Leben der Kirche.... Hier sei unser gemeinsames Ziel mit den "Deutschen Christen", die Stätte brüderlicher Zusammenarbeit.[64]

By November 1933, however, Laible's calls for unity had been replaced by lamentations over the undeniable tiefen Riss in the church.[65] Over 2000 pastors had joined the Notgemeinschaft to defend the faith from "Vergewaltigung und falsche Lehre."[66] But Laible still refused to completely denounce the "German Christians." He insisted,

> dass bei den "Deutschen Christen" viel guter Wille ist und ideale, hohe Ziele, dass unter ihnen eine Menge Pfarrer sind, die das reine Evangelium verkündigen.[67]

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[64] Laible, "Ein Wort zum Frieden," AELKZ 33 (18 Aug.1933):763.

[65] Laible, "Kirchensorgen," AELKZ 47 (24 Nov. 1933):1103.

[66] The Notgemeinschaft refers to the Pfarrernotbund founded by Martin Niemöller in September 1933. The League was a reaction to the "German Christian" influence in the national synod. Goals of the league included loyalty to the confession and opposition to the imposition of the Aryan Clause on the church. See Hermelink, 48-9, 56, 62-3, 71-2.

[67] Laible, "Kirchensorgen," AELKZ 47 (24 Nov. 1933):1103.

The theologians' calls for unity, their dogged adherence to the myth of solidarity, had more than a patriotic, sentimental content. They were also a defense of the values and institutions they supported, and reflected the nostalgia of the conservative theologians for the "good old days." Both in 1914 and in 1933, their calls for unity were calls to rally around their own cause. In 1914, that cause was defending Germany's honor. In 1933, it was promoting the demise of the Weimar Republic and advancing the cause of a nationalistic, authoritarian regime.[68]

The theologians of 1914 and 1933 also set themselves the task of promoting the image of Deutschtum. Theology provided the spiritual element to the definition of the German Volk and the description of the German "mission." The German Volk, the World War I theologians asserted, had a unique character, spiritually superior to that of any other people. The theology professor Adolf Dunkmann claimed in 1915 that the traits of the Germans were surprisingly like those of the Old Testament Jews; especially similar was the profound religiosity of their natures.[69] Nathanael Bonwetsch, a professor at Göttingen, alleged that the Germans

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[68]See Fritz K. Ringer, The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community 1890-1933 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969):187.

[69]A. Dunkmann, "Unsere Hoffnung für unser Volk nach dem Kriege," AELKZ 30 (23 July 1915):703.

were warm-hearted:

> Wer kennt nicht die Geschichte von jenem Deutschen auf den der verwundete Feind, den er tränken wollte, schoss, und der dem Feinde dann doch die Hälfte seiner Flasche reichte?[70]

The image of the Germans as sincere, loyal and capable of profound feeling was contrasted with the stereotype of the English as covetous, traiterous, and superficial:

> Sie schicken gekaufte Soldaten ins Feld, wir sind ein Volk in Waffen. Alle vom Fürstenschloss bis zur Arbeiterhütte senden in gleicher Weise die eigenen Söhne in den Kampf für das Vaterland.[71]

In the Anglo-Saxon world, according to the theologian Fr. Hashagen, the collective conscience was dead.[72]

The World War I theologians, like other German intellectuals, focussed their hatred of the enemy on the English. The Germans felt deeply betrayed by the English, with whom, of all their enemies, they had previously felt the closest bonds of "race", culture and religion. The theologians were contemptuous of the "uncivilized" Russians and

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[70] Nathanael Bonwetsch, "Zur Kriegslage," in Deutsche Theologen über den Krieg: Stimmen aus schwerer Zeit, hrsg. Wilhelm Laible (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1915),10. Laible's book was a collection of articles which had appeared in the Kirchenzeitung in the series, "Was haben uns unsere Theologen zu diesem Kriege zu sagen?"

[71] Kaftan, "Weshalb," AELKZ 48 (27 Nov. 1914):1037.

[72] "Der Wert des Menschenlebens in der angelsächsischen Welt," AELKZ 28 (14 July 1916):666.

the "frivolous" French, but towards the English, their "blood-brothers", they felt intense hatred. This reflects a phenomenon illustrated in the story of Cain and Abel: the closer the relationship, the more passionate the hatred, should enmity arise.

The corollary of the concept of the unique German character was the notion of a special German "mission." The precise nature of that mission varied from author to author. The Germans were sometimes described as the defenders of Christianity, and were compared to the persecuted Christians of Roman times.[73] Adolf von Harnack described Germany as the protector of morality, humanity, and international law, as well as the champion of her own unique Kultur.[74] Alternately, Germany was described as God's means of wreaking judgment on his enemies.[75]

Exaltation of the German Volk was not a new phenomenon. The cry of "Gott mit uns" dated back to the Wars of Liberation, and glorification of the German character had occurred in 1813 as well as during the Franco-Prussian war. In 1813, Ernst Moritz Arndt had described the characteristics of the German:

> Eine lichtere Geistigkeit und eine kühlere Sinnlichkeit als die meisten andern Europäer. Er ist ein ernstes,

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[73] "Ein evangelischer Hirtenbrief zum Krieg," AELKZ 37 (11 Sept. 1914):867 and "Kleine Mitteilungen - Allgemeines," AELKZ 39 (25 Sept. 1914):923.

[74] cited in Bailey,204.

[75] Dietrich Vorwerk, "Darf der Christ hassen?," quoted in Hammer,292.

> denkendes, sinnendes und oft ein tiefsinniges grüblerisches und träumerisches Wesen, er weilt gern bei der Betrachtung der übersinnlichen Dinge und dringt tief in die Abgründe der Ideen, aber auch ebenso tief in die Abgründe des Wahns ein.[76]

The Kirchenzeitung had made similar claims in 1871:

> Die grosse Weltstunde, welche gegenwärtig geschlagen, kann unserm Volk, ja den Völkern der Erde überhaupt einen Segen bringen. Denn es ist ja nicht Selbstüberhebung, wenn wir behaupten, dass im germanischen Stamm noch am meisten sittliche und religiöse Kräfte walten. "Wenn ihr versinkt, versinkt die Menschheit", hat Fichte einst dem deutschen Volke zugerufen.[77]

Although in 1933 Volk und Vaterland were also major themes in the Kirchenzeitung, the emphasis differed considerably from 1914, 1870 and 1813. The concept of Volk in the 1930s was influenced by National Socialist ideology, and values had changed from God to nation to race. Instead of contrasting the Germans with the English or French, the main foil was now the Jews. The focus was on the moral, spiritual, and biological superiority of the Aryan race. Moreover, in contrast to the Kirchenzeitung articles from 1914 to 1918, where denunciations of the enemy had gone unchallenged, the 1933 Kirchenzeitung issues presented a range of opinion on the "Jewish question."

In 1933, the Kirchenzeitung carried a series of ten articles by the Leipzig theology professor, Johannes Leipoldt, entitled

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[76] Ernst Moritz Arndt, Die Ewigkeit des Volkes, ausgewählt von Hans Kern, Deutsche Reihe Bd.20 (Jena: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1934):13.

[77] "Die Stellung der Kirche zu den Zeitereignissen," AELKZ 21 (26 May 1871):372. See also "Liberalismus und Ultramontanismus," AELKZ 47 (24 Nov. 1871):839.

"Antisemitismus in der alten Welt." Leipoldt's series was blatant anti-Semitic propaganda, thinly veiled by "historical objectivity." For example, he described the religious restrictions under which Jews had traditionally lived:

> Es ist verboten...das Vieh in einem heidnischen Gasthof einzustellen.... Die Jüdin darf der Heidin keine Geburtshilfe leisten.... Eine Jüdin darf nicht helfen, dass ein kleiner Götzendiener geboren und gross gezogen wird. Bezeichnenderweise wird von den Rabbinern weiter erwogen: ob eine Jüdin einer Aramäerin (also Heidin) gegen Geld Geburtshilfe leisten darf (wenn man der Heidin Geld abnimmt, so tut ihr das weh).78

Leipoldt outlined the Jewish relationship to the state: "Es fehlte dem Judentum an innerer Verbundenheit mit seinem Wirtsvolke." In cases of national crisis, the reaction of Jews, he argued, was "kühl zu rechnen und dem anzuhängen, der die grössere Macht zu haben schien."[79] Leipoldt's discussion was an obvious attempt to justify the current regime's harsh measures against Jews. Theology here was clearly in the service of racism.

While Leipoldt's ten article series had a prominent place in the Kirchenzeitung in 1933, it was by no means the only comment on anti-Semitism. Professor Adolf Köberle praised the government's anti-Semitic policy:

> Das jüdische Blut ist grundanders als das deutsche, darum ist es uns fremd und fern, darum haben wir keine Freude an den Mischehen zwischen diesen beiden Rassen, so wenig wie

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[78] Johannes Leipoldt, "Antisemitismus in der alten Welt" III, AELKZ 23 (9 June 1933):534.

[79] Leipoldt, VI, AELKZ 26 (30 June 1933):609.

> an der Verbindung mit mongolischem oder afrikanischem Blut. Darum begrüssen wir es, wenn der Staat die Universitäten und Bühnen, die Krankenhäuser und die Gerichte säubert von der unheimlich angeschwollenen Überfremdung durch das jüdische Element.[80]

Laible also commented on the Judenfrage in his review of Gerhard Kittel's book, Die Judenfrage.[81] Laible discussed the four options Kittel had presented for dealing with the Jews: genocide, rebuilding the Jewish state, assimilation, and recognition of the Fremdlingschaft of Jews among the peoples of the world. Laible favored the latter alternative, and explained it more fully:

> Der anständige Gast kann und soll in Frieden auch im Deutschen Volk leben dürfen, aber der Gast ist nicht Inhaber eines öffentlichen Amtes.[82]

Laible warned against the "Krankheit der Sentimentalität," which regarded the fate of individuals, rather than considering the problem of the "Jewish race" in its totality.

Many theologians accepted anti-Semitism in the political sphere, but opposed the application of the Aryan Clause to the Church.[83] The theological faculty of Marburg declared its

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[80]Adolf Köberle, "Das Wort vom Kreuz und die religiöse Lage der Gegenwart," AELKZ 29/30 (28 July 1933):676.

[81]Gerhard Kittel was a distinguished New Testament scholar from Tübingen. He was also a member of the NSDAP and a "German Christian," until the Sportpalast scandal in November 1933. Kittel's book is discussed in Gutteridge,111-15.

[82]Laible, "Zur Judenfrage der Gegenwart," AELKZ 31 (4 Aug. 1933):716.

[83]See Kittel, "Neutestamentliche Gedanken zur Judenfrage," AELKZ 39 (29 Sept. 1933):905, and Laible's comment, Ibid.,910. Also, Gutteridge,91-151.

unanimous rejection of the Aryan Clause in September 1933. Members of the faculty held that the baptized Jew was, in the eyes of the church, no longer a Jew. While the state might deem it necessary to impose restrictions on converted Jews, the church could not do so.[84] On the other hand, two Erlangen theologians, Paul Althaus and Werner Elert, expressed their support of the Aryan Clause. According to them, Jews remained Jews, even if baptized:

> Die allen Christen gemeinsame Gotteskindschaft hebt die biologischen und gesellschaftlich Unterschiede nicht auf, sondern bindet jeden an den Stand, in dem er berufen ist. (I Kor 7,20)[85]

Yet another statement, this one signed by thirteen professors of New Testament, followed, rejecting any application of racist teachings in the church.[86]

The argument about the Aryan Clause had important repercussions for the church in Germany. In fact, it was largely this issue which sparked the formation of the Pfarrernotbund in

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[84]"Votum der Theologischen Fakultät Marburg zum Arierparagraph," AELKZ 39 (29 Sept. 1933):912.

[85]"Theologisches Gutachten aus Erlangen," AELKZ 40 (6 Oct. 1933):929. Althaus and Elert were manipulating Paul's message here. Paul was not justifying anti-Semitism, but elaborating on 1 Cor. 7:7, "Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that." Original emphasis in quote above.

[86]"Kundgebung von 13 Professoren des Neuen Testaments über die Rassenfrage," AELKZ 41 (13 Oct. 1933):958.

September 1933, which was an important step towards the establishment of the Confessing Church the following year. As far as the Jews themselves were concerned, however, the debate made little impact. For one thing, the number of "non-Aryans" who would be directly affected by the application of this clause to ecclesiastical affairs was very small.[87] Moreover, the Jews were eventually removed by the state. The church was no longer in a position to practice a Jewish policy which differed substantially from that of the state, even if it had wanted to.

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[87] In Württemberg, for example, the clause was not implemented because Bishop Wurm rejected the vote in favor of it. There was, however, only one pastor to whom it could have applied: the Aryan husband of a baptized Jewess. Gutteridge, 95.

CHAPTER III

THEOLOGIANS IN ACTION

> Eine Gefahr für unser Christentum entsteht aber aus der nationalen Arbeit nur dann, wenn sie für uns das einzige und letzte Ziel verschafft, für das wir leben. Sollte uns nicht gerade dann, wenn wir ernsthaft national denken und leben lernen, auch die Erkenntnis in hellster Deutlichkeit zuwachsen, dass wir unserem Volkstum nur dann den Bestand sichern, wenn es der göttlichen Ordnung gehorsam bleibt?
>
> -Professor Adolf von Schlatter, 1915[1]

> Die religiöse Aufgabe der Gegenwart besteht darin, die auf dem göttlichen Geheimnis von Blut und Boden sich erhebende Volksgemeinschaft durch Christusgemeinschaft voll in dem Ewigkeitsgrunde zu verankern und so zu einer Einheit zusammenzuschliessen, deren Bestand und Dauer verbürgt ist.
>
> -"German Christian" Pastor Wilhelm Meyer, 1933[2]

Theologians, both during World War I and under the National Socialist regime, not only placed Christian concepts in the service of national and political goals, they also took direct action to promote those goals. This chapter will examine briefly the nature of their activities. What use did the theologians make of the church's traditional channels of activity, for example, prayer and preaching, during times of national crisis? What other tasks did they perform to further the cause of Volk und Vaterland?

Because the Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Kirchenzeitung is the main source for this study, it is possible to make only a very limited assessment of prayers and sermons throughout 1914-18 and 1933-45. Since only a small fraction of prayers and sermons were published, and of those only a very few in the Kirchenzeitung, one cannot expect to gain more than a rough idea of the activities of theologians from that journal. This limitation must be kept in mind throughout this chapter.

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[1] "Biblisches Christentum," AELKZ 31 (30 July 1915):724.

[2] Wilhelm Meyer, Die deutsche Wende in 9 Predigten (Leipzig: Verlag C. Ludwig Angelenk, 1933), 3.

It is not surprising that, especially during World War I, prayers and sermons often reflected more allegiance to the earthly fatherland, than to the heavenly one. It is perhaps inevitable that the church must constantly sacrifice its spiritual integrity to keep pace with the Zeitgeist. This is an aspect of that permanent dilemma of the church: how can such an old institution meet the needs of its people in an ever-changing world, without compromising its own principles? Prayers and sermons are two methods the church uses to communicate to its people. If the message of the church does not address the concerns and preoccupations of those people, they will reject it. In the interests of its own survival, then, the church has to speak to contemporary causes and events. Moreover, pastors themselves are members of society and share the interests, obsessions and allegiances of those around them. One can hardly expect them to stand aside, aloof in times of national crisis.

In 1914 and throughout the subsequent years of the First World War, prayers were intended to place events in a religious perspective, as an ordered cosmos under God. Theologians also tried to use prayers to improve the morale of the Germans by strengthening their conviction that God was with them. This, however, was nothing new in the history of the church. Martin Luther, for example, had composed a prayer for soldiers in wartime, [3] and Friedrich Schleiermacher in 1807 had prayed that God would bless Prussia with courage,

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[3] Luther's prayer is printed in "Wie Geistliche sich in Kriegszeiten verhalten sollen," AELKZ 31 (5 Aug. 1870):853.

wisdom and loyal subjects.[4] During the Franco-Prussian War, the Kirchenzeitung had printed a "Gebet der Kirche in Kriegszeiten." Interestingly, however, the first request in this prayer had been for peace:

> Wir bitten dich, du wollest als der rechte Friedensgott die Herzen der Mächtigen also lenken und leiten, dass sie der Eintracht sich befleissigen, den Frieden suchen und ihm nachjagen.[5]

The word Sieg did not appear in this prayer, which included the supplication:

> Thue wohl allen Landen darin dein Wort wohnet, und lass ja nicht den Weinberg, welchen du unter uns gepflanzet hast, verwüstet werden.[6]

The tone of the prayers printed in the Kirchenzeitung during the Great War was rather more strident. At the same time, however, there was some discussion as to whether it was right for Christians to pray for victory. Invariably, the theologians reached the conclusion that it was not only acceptable, but desirable to do so.

> Es wird gesagt, dass nur ein einziges Gebet für die Erdennot erlaubt sei: "Dein Wille geschehe".... Aber das soll nimmermehr die Einfalt des Gebetes brechen, als ob der Mensch nicht mehr frei Gott bitten dürfte, wie er es versteht. Sonst käme das Beten zu Ende; keiner dürfte

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[4] "Was wir fürchten sollen und was nicht: Am Neujahrstage 1807," in Friedrich Schleiermacher, Predigten, ausgewählt von Hans Urner (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969),82.

[5] "Gebet der Kirche in Kriegszeiten," AELKZ 29 (22 July 1870):541. My underlining.

[6] Ibid. My underlining.

> mehr selbst etwas denken, keiner bitten, keiner an Erhörung glauben; der ganze Schatz der Gebetsverheissungen wird verschüttet.[7]

Paul Althaus went one step further, and justified prayer for victory by equating God's interests with those of Germany:

> Es ist eine herrliche Gnade Gottes, dass wir in die erste Bitte des Vater-unsers in diesen Tagen auch das Gebet um den Sieg unserer Waffen einschliessen dürfen.... Unser Gebet um den Sieg Deutschlands ist, soweit unsere Augen sehen, jetzt ein Gebet um die Verherrlichung des gerechten Namen Gottes.[8]

The prayers which were printed in the Kirchenzeitung addressed God explicitly as protector and defender of Germany. The "Gemeinsame Gebet für die Kirche" in February 1915, included the request, "gib sonderlich unserem Lande Frieden."[9] A supplication for the German Volk in the subsequent was more explicit:

> Gott der Wahrheit, hilf uns von der Macht der Lüge. Gott der Gerechtigkeit, hilf uns von der Ungerechtigkeit. Gott der Stärke, hilf uns von der Gewalt der Feinde; du bist grösser als sie alle, und auf dich hoffen wir, auf dich allein. Stehe du selbst unserem Kriegsheer voran und segne seine Waffen. Nimm dich aller Not des Vaterlands als ein Vater an.[10]

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[7] "Wie man im Kriege beten soll," AELKZ 39 (25 Sept. 1914):905. See also Wilhelm Walther, "Der jetzige Krieg und Dr. Luther" V, AELKZ 46 (13 Nov. 1914):1081.

[8] Paul Althaus, "Aus einem Lazarett im deutschen Osten," AELKZ 49 (4 Dec. 1914):1154.

[9] "Aufforderung zum gemeinsamen Gebet für die Kirche," AELKZ 7 (12 Feb. 1915):150.

[10] "Nachtrag zum gemeinsamen Gebet," AELKZ 8 (19 Feb. 1915):186.

In a time of national crisis, prayer was a way of verbalizing patriotism and reinforcing the association of God's will with the German cause.

Prayer did not feature as prominently in the Kirchenzeitung in 1933. There were of course accounts of theologians praying for the new regime and its leaders,[11] but that was accepted practice in the church. It was also a biblical command: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority." (1 Tim.2:1-2) Prayer in other contexts, however, was not discussed in 1933. This omission might have served as a warning to the theologians. Had they been more astute, and less blinded by their enthusiasm for the destruction of the republic, they might have realized that the anticipated religious revival was, indeed, founded on national, rather than spiritual values.

Sermons, like prayers, had had a "political" function long before the outbreak of World War I. In 1809, for example, Friedrich Schleiermacher attracted large crowds with his Sunday messages ,

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[11]For example, the Kirchenzeitung reported that Dr. Kapler, the president of the Evangelische Kirchenbund, acknowledged prayer for the National Socialist regime to be the church's responsibility, and designated Easter Sunday 1933 as a day of prayer for the new government. "Kirchliche Nachrichten - Deutschland," AELKZ 17 (28 April 1933):404.

rousing the Germans to action against Napoleon. Schleiermacher's sermons were innocently "biblical" enough to avoid French proscription, but still managed to convey a powerful patriotic message.[12]

It is no surprise, then, that the World War I theologians also used sermons to express their own enthusiastic patriotism, and to encourage loyal support of the German nation. A rash of published collections of wartime sermons appeared in the Kirchenzeitung advertisements in the latter months of 1914. Prominent titles were: Kriegspredigten aus dem Jahre 1914, edited by Dr. V. Wurster; Gott mit uns! Lieder von Krieg und Sieg, collected by Viktor Hermann; Für Kirche und Vaterland, by Dr. Rump; Mit Gott durch Kampf zum Sieg; Köhler's Der Weltkrieg im Licht der deutsch-protestantischen Kriegspredigt; and Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott, Kriegspredigten, edited by C. Bürchstümmer.[13]

While almost all of the World War I theologians agreed that wartime sermons must deal with the war,[14] they disagreed as to how

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[12]Rehtwisch,175.

[13]See for example the advertisements in AELKZ 41 (9 Oct. 1914):951.

[14]Unlike most of his contemporaries, Pastor Christoph Blumhardt jun. advocated preaching sermons which did not speak directly to the issue of the war. He berated his fellow-pastors for rejecting spiritual values:

> "Heute will das Christentum wie ein Holzwurm in alle Kriegsgeschichten hinein, heute will man in die Weltgeschichte hinein, und es geht da viel innerliches verloren. Wir müssen uns scheiden, wir müssen weg davon, und ich lese manchen Tag keine einzige Zeitung, weil ich immer Sorge habe, man komme in dieses verfluchte Weltwesen hinein. Und

this ought to be done. In an article entitled "Wir Pfarrer und unsere Kriegspredigt," a certain Pastor Josten described what he considered the appropriate emphasis for wartime sermons:

> Das gottgeschenkte und gottgesegnete Vaterland zu erhalten und zu schützen ist erste Pflicht. Daher ist auch dieser Krieg erste vaterländische Aufgabe.... Unser Vaterland hat auch seine Aufgabe in der Welt. Das viel benutze und viel geschmähte "An deutschem Wesen solle die Welt genesen" - recht verstanden wird es zu einem religiösen Gedanken.... Deutsche Gesittung, vor allem deutsches evangelisches Christentum, alles echt Deutsche und echt Christliche drängt uns zur Arbeit an der Welt.[15]

Another clergyman, Pastor Kühner, went farther in his advocation of patriotic content in sermons, and recommended the use of texts from German literature. In addition to excerpts from Schiller, Goethe, Fichte, Arndt and Ranke, Kühner based his sermons on texts from Richard Wagner, Bismarck and the Kaiser.[16]

For many theologians, wartime sermons were not primarily a means of worshiping God or edifying the congregation, but rather a way to further the cause of Volk und Vaterland. Still, there were some lonely voices of protest crying in the wilderness. Gustav Wohlenberg, a professor of New Testament in Erlangen, deplored the preaching of chauvinistic nationalism from the pulpit:

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was kann man machen? Es hat alles keinen Wert. Verleugne dich! Weg davon! Im Bunde Gottes stehst du und nicht im Bunde mit der Welt." Quoted in Hammer, 238. Blumhardt's theology had an important impact on Karl Barth.

[15] Josten, "Wir Pfarrer und unsere Kriegspredigt" II, AELKZ 23 (4 June 1915):534.

[16] Quoted in Hammer, 107. The "German Christians" in the 1930s were guilty of similar abuses of the pulpit. Conway provides an example of a Christmas sermon extolling the ancient German feast of light and praising Hitler as Germany's saviour. Conway, 364-5.

> Der Prediger darf...nicht sein eigenes Volk ungebührlich preisen und loben und hat sich auf's fleissigste vor der prahlerischen Gesinnung und Sprechweise zu hüten: ich danke dir, Gott, dass ich Deutscher nicht bin wie Engländer, Franzosen usw.... Wer gibt uns denn das Recht, bedingungslos oder doch fast ohne Einschränkung urbi et orbi zu verkünden; wir werden, wir müssen siegen?... Wir können gar nicht ernst genug betonen, dass der Sieg vom Herrn kommt.[17]

Wohlenberg warned against using scriptural texts out of context to support the conviction that God would grant Germany victory.[18]

The question of what to preach was not frequently raised in the Kirchenzeitung in 1933. Pastors were more likely guided in this decision by the Synod's circulars for the pericopes, in which theologians provided interpretive analyses. The Kirchenzeitung did recount some instances when pastors were instructed by their superiors to deliver certain messages from the pulpit. In April 1933, for example, all Bavarian pastors were sent a Kundgebung from the Landeskirchenrat, with orders that it be read from the pulpit. The Kundgebung was in response to the resignation of Kirchenpräsident Friedrich Veit.[19] It announced:

> Ein Staat, der wieder anfängt nach Gottes Gebot zu regieren, darf in diesem Tun nicht nur des Beifalls, sondern auch der freudigen Mitarbeit der Kirche sicher sein. Mit Dank und Freude nimmt die Kirche wahr, wie der neue Staat der Gotteslästerung wehrt, der Unsittlichkeit zu Leibe geht, Zucht und

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[17] Wohlenberg, "Winke und Warnungen für Predigten in der Kriegszeit," in Laible, 17.

[18] Wohlenberg specifically mentioned two frequently misused texts: Luke 12:32, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," and Romans 8:31, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

[19] Veit's resignation was not explained in the Kirchenzeitung, but the tone of the Kundgebung indicates that there were political reasons. One month earlier, Veit had warned pastors that it was their duty to serve the entire Kirchenvolk, not just a political party. Scholder, 297.

> Ordnung mit starker Hand aufrichtet, wie er zur Gottesfurcht ruft, die Ehe heilig gehalten und die Jugend geistlich erzogen wissen will, wie er der Väter Tat wieder zu Ehren bringt und heisse Liebe zu Volk und Vaterland nicht nur verfemt, sondern in tausend Herzen entzündet.... Wir können unsere Gemeinden nur bitten, sich ernstlich und willig dafür einzusetzen, dass die starken aufbauenden Kräfte, welche die neue Bewegung in sich trägt, zum vollen, ungehinderten Siege komme.[20]

Such a message, delivered from the pulpits across Bavaria, must have considerably enhanced the credibility of the National Socialist state.

Aside from such explicit orders, there was no discussion in the Kirchenzeitung in 1933 on the content of sermons. There was no debate as to whether the issue of National Socialism should be addressed from the pulpit, nor was there any indication of attempts to persuade congregations to view the new regime critically. Perhaps some pastors used their sermons to this end, but the orthodox theologians represented in the Kirchenzeitung supported the NS state during the early months of 1933. They had no reason to encourage their congregations to do otherwise.

When war broke out in 1939, discussions of sermons in wartime began to appear again in the Kirchenzeitung. There was not, however, a flood of published wartime sermons, as there had been in 1914. On the contrary, not one such collection was advertised. This reflected both strict government controls on publications and the lack of enthusiasm among the theologians for the war. In the Kirchenzeitung, however, the question was asked: "Was sollen wir im

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[20] "Kirchliche Nachrichten - Bayern," AELKZ 16 (21 April 1933):379.

Krieg predigen?" In fact, that was the title of the first feature article dealing specifically with the war. The author stressed the importance of preaching the message of Christ. He warned pastors against preaching about political events:

> Ein solches Verhalten ist ja nicht nur den Massgebenden staatlichen Stellen unerwünscht. Nein, unser eigener Auftrag muss uns dies verbieten. Wir haben etwas anderes zu sagen; und dieses andere ist so entscheidend für die Existenz unserer Hörer in Zeit und Ewigkeit, dass uns für Abschweifungen in unsrer Predigt auch nicht die geringste Zeit übrig bleibt.[21]

Another article dealing with wartime sermons contended that Buss-predigten were necessary, but warned pastors to avoid the sin of the Pharisees: "Ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers." (Luke 11:46) The author cautioned against repeating the mistake which had been committed with the Durchhalte-Predigten during the Great War:

> Gerade die Soldaten an der Front waren in den Jahren des Weltkrieges oft enttäuscht, wenn ihnen der Pfarrer nichts anderes zu sagen hatte, als was sie von ihren Offizieren hörten. Was sie sich von ihren Offizieren gerne sagen liessen, das wollten sie nicht noch einmal vom Pfarrer hören.[22]

The tone of the 1939 discussions of wartime sermons was rather different from that of similar articles in the World War I years. There was less naive and unreflecting preaching of patriotism, more willingness to deliver the message of the Bible, and less readiness

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[21] Gottfried Probst, "Was sollen wir im Krieg predigen?", AELKZ 18 (6 Oct. 1939):342. See also Martin Doerne, "Die Verkündigung der Kirche im Kriege," AELKZ 20 (20 Oct. 1939):358.

[22] "Richtlinien für die evangelische Verkündigung im Kriege" II, AELKZ 28 (15 Dec. 1939):452.

to use the sermon as a tool in the service of the fatherland. The theologians' lack of conviction in the "righteousness" of Germany's cause in 1939 was apparent.

The church had other methods, besides prayers and sermons, which it had traditionally used to promote national causes. Involvement of the church in fostering patriotism predated the Wars of Liberation, although that era provides abundant evidence of such activity. In 1816, for example, the Prussian Church decreed an annual commemorative service for victims of the Wars of Liberation.[23] In 1871, the Sedanfest was instituted at the instigation of Pastor Friedrich von Bodelschwingh.[24]

During World War I, the church involved itself with the war effort in a number of ways. According to Laible, by June 1915, approximately forty million gläubige Schriften und Blätter had been sent to the front.[25] The Lutherlied, "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott", was sung "ungeheuer viel im Feld."[26] Some pastors

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[23] Mosse, 76. The process in evidence with such national-religious ceremonies was not simply the "politicization" of theology; there were also elements of the "theologization" of politics, as national festivals and rites borrowed religious symbols, songs, and styles of services in an attempt to create their own mass movement. Mosse deals with this phenomenon in chapter 4, 74-99.

[24] Ibid., 90. This Bodelschwingh was the father of the "short-lived" Reichsbischof, Friedrich von Bodelschwingh. See Chapter I, 39.

[25] "Unsere Bereitschaft für neue Kämpfe und Ausgaben," AELKZ 24 (11 June 1915):557.

[26] "Das religiöse Leben im Feld," von einem deutschen Unteroffizier, AELKZ 47 (2 Jan. 1914):1108.

blessed soldiers before they left for the front.[27] When contributors to the Kirchenzeitung heard rumors of German fraternization with the enemy, and visits between neighboring trenches, "sogar Deutsche mit Engländern, diesen Mördern unseres Volkes," they responded with a call for "eine gut geschriebene Flugschrift für das Heer über das, was Frankreich und England ist und will."[28]

One widely publicized action taken by an individual theologian to further the war effort, was the decision of Caspar René Gregory, a professor of New Testament, to enlist for active duty. Gregory was seventy years old at the time. In the Kirchenzeitung, he explained why he had taken this step. Had the war been against France alone, or even against France and Russia, he might not have felt called:

> Als aber England dazu kam, das mächtige England, England das rücksichtslose Land, England, das die Burenfrauen und -kinder hingemordet hatte, England, das brutal gegen Irland

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[27] "Kleine Mitteilungen - Brandenburg," AELKZ 36 (4 Sept. 1914):853. The column carried this account:

> "In manchen Kirchen wird am Schluss des Gottesdienstes noch die Frage gestellt, ob solche anwesend seien, die in den Krieg ziehen, und ob sie, wie einst in den Freiheitskriegen, zum Kampf aufgesegnet werden möchten. In einzelnen Kirchen sprangen die Kriegsteilnehmen nur so auf und traten mit ihren Frauen und Bräuten vor den Altar und liessen sich zu dem entscheidungsvollen Kampf einsegnen."

This sort of "ritual" was not unique to World War I Germany; the practice of blessing warriors before they leave for battle probably pre-dates Christianity!

[28] "Mit Herz und Hand fürs Vaterland," AELKZ 3 (15 Jan. 1915):56.

> seit Jahrhunderten gehandelt hatte, England, das Indien aussaugt und verhungern lässt--als England dazu kam, wusste ich, dass es sich um das Ganze handelte.[29]

Gregory was killed at the Battle of Arras, 9 April 1917.

One of the tasks of churchmen during the war was to comfort the bereaved. There was a tendency among theologians to confuse the national significance of a soldier's death with the Christian meaning of death. Instead of using Christian perceptions of life and death to comfort the families of the fallen, some theologians resorted to nationalist clichés. Oberhofprediger Bruno Doehring illustrated this kind of thinking in his "Trostworte für die Witwe eines gefallenen Kriegers":

> "Wer sich als ein Kind Gott weiss, für den heisst sterben: zu Gott gehen. Und fürs Vaterland sterben heisst: von den vielen Wegen, auf denen Gott die seinen zu sich rufen kann, den begnadetsten haben gehen dürfen. Fängst du an zu verstehen, warum wir dich glücklich preisen? Einmal, weil dein Mann zu Gott gegangen ist, und sodann, weil er auf dem schönsten aller Wege zu ihm zu gehen gewürdigt ist.... Gott und Vaterland! Sie forderten ihn von dir. Wem hättest du ihn wohl lieber gegeben?"[30]

One other aspect of the war effort with which the theologians involved themselves was the sale of war bonds. The 18 September 1914 issue of the Kirchenzeitung dedicated the entire first page to an advertisement for war bonds. The

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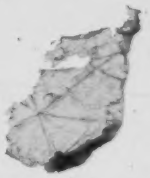
[29]Caspar René Gregory, "Warum ich ins deutsche Heer eingetreten bin, und warum ich darin bleibe," AELKZ 50 (15 Dec. 1916):1200, and "Gregory gefallen," AELKZ 16 (20 April 1917):377. Gregory had expressed his anti-English sentiments in an earlier Kirchenzeitung article, "Englische Christen und der Weltkrieg," AELKZ 1 (7 Jan. 1916):13.

[30]quoted in Hammer,207. See also Walther, "Der jetzige Krieg und Dr. Luther" IV, AELKZ 45 (6 Nov. 1914):1054.



headline read "Zeichnet die Kriegsanleihen!" and a note from the editor explained:

> Dieser Aufruf ging uns mit der Bitte um Veröffentlichung auf der ersten Seite unseres Blattes zu. Wir empfehlen ihn auf das wärmste zum Dienst unseres grossen Vaterlandes.[31]

The issues of 1917, while characterized by fewer references to the war than those of the previous years, included an on-going advertising campaign for war bonds. War bonds were even advertised from the pulpit. In honor of Hindenburg's birthday in 1917, the pastor of the Apostel-Paulus-Kirche in Schöneberg spoke on "Hindenburg und der deutsche Glaube." He reminded the congregation of the birthday gift Hindenburg had requested: Kriegsanleihe. After the service, the pastor and Generalsuperintendent Dibelius took subscriptions for the bonds in the church foyer. A total of 30,000 marks was collected.[32]

The heroic tone which representatives of the church adopted, both at home and at the front, served to antagonize many Germans, rather than building up their morale. The 1918 "Vorwort" lamented:

> So erfreuliche Nachrichten noch immer von der Front einlaufen, der grössere Teil der Feldprediger und christlichen Soldaten ist fast einstimmig im Urteil über ein Nachlassen des religiösen Interesses im Heere.[33]

An article in the Reichsbote in 1919 laid part of the blame for the

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[31] AELKZ 38 (18 Sept. 1914):881.

[32] quoted from Die Chronik der Christlichen Welt, in Hammer, 300.

[33] "Vorwort," AELKZ 1 (4 Jan. 1918):3.

decline of the church after the war on the Durchhalte-Predigten:

> Es ist mir von Kameraden so oft gesagt und geklagt worden, dass sie die 'Durchhalte'-Predigt allmählich nicht mehr mit anhören könnten und diese Art Predigten ihnen jeden Gottesdienst verekelt habe. Der Schaden, den unsere Kirche an ihrer Männerwelt durch diese unseligen Kriegspredigten gehabt hat und hat, ist unberechenbar.[34]

The involvement of Protestant theologians in national affairs in the 1930s was different from that during the World War I years. After early 1933, there was by no means the same extent of consensus among theologians as there had been during 1914 to 1918. Those theologians who rejected the National Socialist regime, and even those who had misgivings about it, were urged not to involve themselves politically. On 14 September 1933, the Kirchenzeitung published an "Aufruf des evangelischen Oberkirchenrats Berlin," warning pastors to refrain from involving the church in political matters, either by addressing political issues from the pulpit, or by participating in political activities in the congregation or community. The Aufruf reminded the pastors that, under the new Notverordnungen, criticism of governmental policies could be punished by law.[35]

The theologians, however, because of their antagonism

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[34] quoted in Hammer, 340.

[35] "Kirchliche Nachrichten - Preussen," AELKZ 28 (14 July 1933):667.

towards Weimar and their German Nationalist sympathies, often, in indirect ways, involved themselves in political affairs. William Sheridan Allen, in The Nazi Seizure of Power, recounts how the Nazis could use the Lutheran church to gain support in Northeim. Lutheran pastors frequently warned churchgoers against the Social Democratic party, and linked it with communism and atheism. The Nazis were able to exploit that fear. During the first months of 1933, the Lutheran church played a prominent part at Nazi celebrations, and pastors frequently addressed rallies and meetings.[36]

Once the National Socialists were in power, theologians made gestures which enhanced the credibility of the new regime. The president of the Bavarian Pfarrerverein, Pastor Klingler, sent a statement to the Minister of Culture pledging the support of the Protestant clergy to the new regime.[37] Public demonstrations of cooperation between church and state helped perpetuate the image of the legitimacy of the National Socialist state. The ceremony inducting the new bishop of Bavaria into office, in June 1933, was an example of such a demonstration. The new bishop, Hans Meiser,[38]

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[36]William Sheridan Allen, The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town 1930-1935 (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965),81-2,222.

[37]"Kirchliche Nachrichten - Bayern," AELKZ 15 (14 April 1933):356

[38]Hans Meiser later became a prominent member of the Confessing Church. Like Wurm, he had supported the Reichsbischof initially, but broke away in late 1933. He maintained his post as Landesbischof throughout the Nazi period, and kept the Bavarian church intact.

led a parade to the city hall in Nürnberg, where he was greeted by Reichswehr, SA, SS and Stahlhelm troops in formation.[39] Meiser was welcomed by Mayor Liebel, and the president of the Landessynode, Oberregierungsrat Bracker. Bracker closed his speech by proclaiming that Luther's words would always be the motto of the church:

> "Meinen Deutschen bin ich geboren, meinen Deutschen will ich dienen."

Churchmen also demonstrated their loyalty to the National Socialist regime at the international level. In June 1939, when Bishop August Marahrens of Hanover received a call from the Archbishop of Canterbury to participate in a day of prayer for international peace, he rejected it on the grounds that it would be unjust and harmful to Germany:

> Es kann nicht ausbleiben, dass Ihr Vorschlag in diesem Augenblick einer Verdächtigung unseres Volkes Vorschub leisten und als politische Waffe gegen unser Volk dienen wird. Er wird weithin so verstanden werden, als sollten auch die Kirchen der Welt in den Dienst einer gegen Deutschland gerichteten Politik gestellt werden. Demgegenüber muss ich feststellen, dass wir Evangelischen mit allen Gliedern unseres Volkes hinter unserem Führer stehen, dessen geschichtliches Werk dieses Unrecht von Versailles korrigiert. Es ist Schicksal und Auftrag der Christenheit, dass der Christ an sein Volk gebunden ist und mit seinem Volke fühlt und handelt. Sie stehen zu ihrem Volke und dem, was ihm heilig ist, und ich zu dem meinen.[40]

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[39] "Amtseinsetzung des neuen Landesbischofs in Bayern," AELKZ 26 (30 June 1933):619.

[40] "Ein Brief von Landesbischof Marahrens," AELKZ 2 (16 June 1939):40.

Even when the hostility of the Nazi regime towards the church became glaringly obvious, theologians still sought to defend the church by stressing its loyalty to the National Socialist state. In October 1937, for example, an article disputed the allegation that the church had failed in the struggle against "bolshevism" and atheism. The church, it claimed, had been one of the early allies of National Socialism:

> Ist die Bewegung des Nationalsozialismus nicht zu allererst in unserem evangelischen Gemeinden auf wohl vorbereiteten, fruchtbaren Boden gestossen, hat sie nicht gerade hier die ersten grössten Erfolge errungen?[41]

The author pointed to a specific incident illustrating the church's support for National Socialism:

> Ist's nicht eine bayrische Pfarrfrau gewesen, die 1923 nach dem missglückten 9. November den Männern um Adolf Hitler den Weg gezeigt hat über die bayrische Grenze nach Österreich, dass sie dort sich in Sicherheit bringen konnten?

Two months later, another Kirchenzeitung article defended the church against charges of pacifism and failure to participate in the struggle for freedom and national Lebensrechte. To refute this accusation, examples of the church's persistent protest against the Kriegsschuldlüge and the Versailler Diktat were cited.[42] Laible advanced similar arguments in defense of the church in his 1938 "Vorwort":

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[41] Klingler, "Zur Ehrenrettung des Pfarrerstandes," AELKZ 43 (22 Oct. 1937):968-9.

[42] "Die Kirche hat nicht geschwiegen," AELKZ 52 (24 Dec. 1937):1163-5.

> Der Staat hat mehr als einmal die Probe gemacht, was ihm die Kirche nützte; zuletzt im Weltkrieg. Woher kam das tapfere Kriegsheer, das vier Jahre lang einem übermächtigen Feinde standhielt? Kam es nicht aus christlichen Familien, aus christlichen Schulen, aus der Erziehung der Kirche? Woher kam das geduldige Ausharren des Volkes daheim; seine Tröstung in dunklen Tagen, sein Gottvertrauen, auch als alles brechen wollte? Hatte nicht die Kirche ihren Hauptanteil daran auszurichten, zu stärken, den Glauben der Wankenden zu erhalten?
>
> Un nun hat die Kirche über Nacht das Vertrauen des Staates verloren, sie soll aus ihrem Dienst am Volk entlassen werden, sie nütze ihm nichts mehr.43

Instead of asserting their independence from the state, the theologians were still looking for ways they could use the church to serve the German state.

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[43]Laible, "Vorwort," AELKZ 1 (7 Jan. 1938):5.

CHAPTER IV

GOD, THE BIBLE, AND THE GERMAN NATION

> "Der Herr gibt das Wort mit grossen Scharen von Siegesboten." Wo das sich erfüllt hat, wie jetzt geschieht, gibt nur die Antwort: "Lasset uns mit Danken vor sein Angesicht kommen." Vor sein Angesicht. Sein Angesicht ist nicht mehr verborgen wie vor dem, sondern aufgedeckt, und grosse Gnade scheint davon.
>
> -Kirchenzeitung, 1915[1]

> Wir können ehrlicherweise nur da von Christentum reden, wo das, was Christentum genannt wird, Heldentum ist, wie Jesu Leben Heldentum war.
>
> -"German Christian" Pastor Wilhelm Meyer, 1933[2]

> Even as an object of historical consideration, theology demands the theological perception, theological involvement.... It is a conditio sine qua non of the success of our undertaking that it should be approached theologically, in accordance with its subject matter.
>
> -Karl Barth[3]

Both during the First World War and in 1933, theologians attempted to adapt the content of theology to fulfill the needs of the nation in crisis. There was, however, a major difference between these two periods. In 1914 to 1918, the theologians almost without exception willingly participated in the accommodation of theology to national values. In 1933, however, there was sharp

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[1] "Die Engel des Sieges," AELKZ 36 (3 Sept. 1915):841.

[2] Meyer, 11.

[3] Barth, Protestant Theology, 15.

division over this issue. In the years from 1914 to 1918, the Kirchenzeitung bears repeated evidence of the theologians' attempts to promote a concept of God as a national sovereign, to portray Jesus as a heroic figure, and to reconcile his teachings of love and peace with the imperatives of war. The theologians during World War I emphasized the importance of the Old Testament, and used the eschatological teachings of the New Testament as a means of understanding contemporary events. In 1933, however, the Kirchenzeitung opposed the attempts of the "German Christians" and other völkisch religious groups, to adapt aspects of Christianity to fit their own Weltanschauungen.

It was, however, difficult for the orthodox theologians of the Kirchenzeitung to effectively oppose the "German Christians." For one thing, many of the views of the "German Christians" resembled the nationalist theology which had been prevalent during the First World War, and which continued to influence many of the orthodox theologians throughout the Weimar years. Like the World War I theologians and their heirs, the "German Christians" equated God's will with national political interests, and emphasized the heroic, aggressive aspects of the Christian message. Because the orthodox theologians of the Kirchenzeitung shared some of the "German Christians'" values and notions themselves, they could not offer effective resistance against those ideas when expressed in a more extreme form. Moreover, the orthodox theologians had no firm theological basis for rejecting the entire concept of

the Glaubensbewegung Deutscher Christen. They attacked the extreme elements of that movement and refuted specific points of its beliefs, but could not justify rejecting it altogether. Such was not the case with the dialectic theologians. For them, the "German-Christians" were never acceptable, simply because they were not true to the word of God. Thus, in the Kirchenkampf, the "new", dialectic theology was allied with the Bekenntnisfront --the Confessing Church--, National Socialist ideology was the basis for most of the beliefs of the "German Christians", and the "middle front" represented to a large extent orthodox theology.

While in 1870, the Kirchenzeitung had sharply criticized the "trivialization" of God to fit the Zeitgeist,[4] in 1914 the theologians constructed their own "caricature" of God to satisfy the spiritual needs of the nation at war. They equated God's

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[4]See "Kritik des modernen Zeitbewusstseins," AELKZ 8 (25 Feb. 1870):139.

> "Gott der Vater musste sich erst waschen und kämmen lassen, bis er ganz zahm und galant erschien. Von einem Zorn Gottes durfte da entfernt keine Spur mehr durchblicken. Der liebe Gott musste gerade so gebildet, human, aufgeklärt und galant sein wie die Toilettentheologen der christlichen Taschenbücher, Morgen- und Abendopfer für Jungfrauen. Die Kirche verwandelt sich in eine Mühle. Oben schüttelt man die massiven Patriarchen und Propheten, Apostel und Kirchenväter von Stein und Erz hinein, und unten kommen sie als schmackhaftes Mehl, als delikate, galante und kokette Männchen wieder heraus."

will with Germany's interests, and interpreted his biblical messages and contemporary events as his promise of victory.[5] According to Paul Althaus, prayers for German victory were equivalent to prayers for the glorification of God's name.[6] Hermann Bezzel called the war a "holy way,"[7] and the Wiesbaden pastor, Fritz Philippi, claimed that Germany was carrying out God's will on earth.[8] In the opinion of Pastor Schröder of Leipzig, Germany could depend on God's justice.[9]

By associating God's plan so closely with German goals, the theologians excluded the possibility of defeat. Germany's enemies, boasted the columnist of "Kirchliche Nachrichten," had set the entire world against her, but had failed to reckon with God, whose will alone determined events.[10] Wilhelm Walther, for his part, assured his readers:

"Gott will den Sieg geben durch unsere Rüstung, wenn man

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[5]Hammer and Pressel both deal with the wartime concept of God as a projection of the fatherland. According to Hammer, "Deutscher Geist wird hier zum heiligen Geist." p.139. Pressel reaches the same conclusion:

"Für die Kriegstheologie war das Wollen und Handeln Gottes festgelegt. Es war für sie identisch mit dem menschlichen bzw. nationalen Fortschritt." p.352.

[6]Althaus, "Aus einem Lazarett im deutschen Osten," AELKZ 49 (4 Dec. 1914):1154.

[7]Bezzel, "Der heilige Krieg," in Laible, 68.

[8]Quoted in Pressel, 117.

[9]"Die Kriegsdichtung unserer Zeit und die Religion," AELKZ 20 (14 May 1915):469.

[10]"Kirchliche Nachrichten," AELKZ 43 (23 Oct. 1914):1019.

> sie haben kann; auch ohne unsere Rüstung, wenn man sie nicht haben kann."[11]

Scriptural texts were understood by the theologians as specific promises of victory to Germany. Jesus' words, "Es wird euch alles zufallen," were interpreted as an assurance of "Siege und endlich der Friede."[12] To the text, "Wir wissen, dass denen die Gott lieben, alle Dinge zum besten dienen," Althaus added the words: "ja alle, auch der Krieg."[13] God's promise to comfort his people was turned into a promise to Germany. The text for the meditation of 16 October 1914 was Isaiah 51:12, "I, even I, am he that comforteth you.":

> Wenn Gott so spricht, bekennt er sich als Helfer. Das Wort ist ein starkes Wort der Hilfe an die Verlassenen und zugleich der Drohung gegen ihre Feinde. Wer will's wagen, wenn der Allmächtige sich erhoben und zu einem Menschen oder zu einem Volke gesprochen hat: "Ich, ich bin euer Tröster."[14]

God, in the view of the wartime theologians, was knowable and predictable: "Sein Angesicht ist nicht mehr verborgen wie vordem, sondern aufgedeckt."[15] Since, according to the theologians, God was faithful to Germany's cause, there could be little doubt

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[11] Schröder, "Die Kriegsdichtung," AELKZ 20 (14 May 1915):469. Schröder quotes from Walther.

[12] "Friedensbedingungen," AELKZ 26 (30 June 1916):610.

[13] Althaus, "Der Krieg und unser Gottesglaube," in Laible, 247.

[14] "Der Menschentröster," AELKZ 42 (16 Oct. 1914):977.

[15] "Die Engel des Sieges," AELKZ 36 (2 Sept. 1915):841.

as to what actions he would take: "Gott spielt nicht mit seinen Verheissungen, was er sagt, dass hält er."[16] The Kirchenzeitung's report on the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was a glaring example of the theologians' belief in the predictability of God:

> Was Gott angefangen hat, pflegt er auch zu vollenden: er tut nichts halb. Mit Zuversicht schauen wir auf die bevorstehende Vollendung im Westen; und es dünkt uns wie eine Schändung Gottes, ihm diese Vollendung nicht zuzutrauen.[17]

Years later, Karl Barth remarked that his dialectical theology, which describes God as der ganz andere--the "completely other," the "overwhelmingly high and distant, the strange," was developed in response to his disillusionment with the German theologians and their teachings during World War I.[18]

In the 1930s, the "German Christians" carried the nationalist wartime theology to its logical conclusion by perceiving God as a "German God," who was the highest proponent of German national goals. The "German Christians" had appropriated the national-theological rhetoric of the World War I theologians and adapted it to the new situation:

> Es hilft mir kein Gott, der mich nicht fordern kann.... Ich will mich meinem Gott stellen und seiner Wahrheit mannhaft ins Auge sehen. Ich weiss, dass dieser Weg, wenn ich nicht ausweiche, hinführt zum Kreuz auf Golgotha. Ich will deisen Weg gehen, den vor mir Luther,

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[16] "Ein Rat zum Sieg," AELKZ 33 (14 Aug. 1914):770.

[17] "Der Friede mit Russland," AELKZ 11 (15 March 1918):233.

[18] Barth, "Humanity of God," 32.

> Ernst Moritz Arndt, Frhr. von Stein und Bismarck gegangen sind .... Ich will keine Religion, die Opium ist für das Volk. Darum lehne ich ab alle Religion, die Gott nicht Gott sein lässt. Denn das weiss ich, Gott ausstreichen aus meinem Leben, das wäre das schlimmste, mein Herz und Gewissen einschläferndes Gift.
>
> Wo Gott aber Gott, das heisst der Herr sein darf, da weiss ich, da ist Religion nicht Opium, sondern Dynamit.[19]

It was apparent already in the demands drawn up at the first Reichstagung of the "German Christians" in 1933, that their image of God was synonymous with the abstract notion of German Volkstum. God was mentioned in only one sentence of the half-page long final statement, and then he was used to lend credibility to the concept of Volk:

> "Gott hat mich als Deutschen geschaffen, Deutschtum ist Geschenk Gottes, Gott will, dass ich für mein Deutschtum kämpfe." [20]

Wilhelm Zoellner, with some concern, recognized that the völkisch emphasis of the "German Christians" meant the transformation of God into a national deity:

> Der völkische Idealismus ist fasziniert von dem Gedanken, den nationalsozialistischen Staat religiös zu unterbauen. Er will eine Volksreligion mit einem die Kräfte von Blut und Boden zusammenfassenden Gott. Dieser Gott wird wesentlich immanent gedacht, etwa als Personifikation des Volkstums.[21]

Laible, too, denounced the deliberate attempts of the "German Christians" to distort the nature of God. This became evident

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[19] J. Lorentzen, "Bekenntnis eines Nationalsozialisten," AELKZ 25 (23 June 1933):592-3.

[20] quoted in "Kirchliche Nachrichten - Deutschland," AELKZ 15 (14 April 1933):355.

[21] Zoellner, "Die kirchlichen Kampffronten vom Bekenntnis aus gesehen" II, AELKZ 22 (1 June 1934):508.

when the "German Christians" called religious gatherings Gottesfeiern, rather than Gottesdienste. Laible found this rather appropriate. After all, why should one serve a God one had "invented" oneself?

> Diese "Gottesfeiern" sind geradezu überlastet mit Liedern und Ansprachen in schwärmerischem, sentimentalem, dionysischem Stil, die Einfalt und Nüchternheit wahrer Frömmigkeit ist verschwunden, ja die Kirche selbst ist verschwunden hinter den modernen Losungen von Volk, Rasse und Vaterland.[22]

Was what Zoellner and Laible described different from the use of Christianity during World War I?

In the same way that God was trivialized to fit the needs of the fatherland, so Jesus was transformed and adapted into a heroic figure.[23] In the years from 1914 to 1918, the Kirchenzeitung expressed some concern as to the appropriate role of Jesus in wartime theology. In October 1914, an essay entitled "Jesus und der Krieg" was discussed in the Kirchenzeitung. The author claimed that in the early days of the war, everyone had been unsure how to reconcile Jesus with contemporary events:

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[22] Laible, "Thüringer Gottesfeiern," AELKZ 29 (22 July 1938): 638.

[23] Both Hammer and Pressel describe the role of Jesus in the German war theology. See Hammer's chapter "Zur Christologie," 129-33; and Pressel, "Das Jesusbild,"232-50. According to the French philosopher Julien Benda, the attempt to transform Jesus into a national hero was not the preserve of Germans or Protestants. He discussed two French authors who took this approach during the Great War: A. Luge, La grande loi de l'amour des hommes; and Pere Ollivier, Les Amities de Jesus. Julien Benda, The Great Betrayal (La Trahison les Clercs), trans. Richard Aldington (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1929):69.

> Gott stand gewiss allen vor der Seele, aber nicht Jesus, wenigstens zunächst nicht. Er schien wie mit naturgesetzlicher Notwendigkeit völlig in den Hintergrund getreten zu sein. Regimenter, Rosse, Kanonen, Schlachtbegeisterung--und Jesus, nein, das ging nicht.[24]

He then argued, however, that Jesus was indeed relevant in wartime, and pointed to his significance as the supreme example of selfless sacrifice. He quoted from the Berlin pastor Friedrich Rittelmeyer's "Trostbrief an die Witwe" to substantiate this claim:

> "Wer sein Leben verliert, der wird es erhalten zum ewigen Leben." "Wer es vermag, für die hohen, heiligen Güter des Vaterlandes sein Leben hinzugeben, der hat, sollte ich denken, gerade die Gesinnung die wir fürs Gottesreich brauchen."[25]

The "Vorwort" for 1915 advanced a similar argument. At the beginning of the war, its author contended, many Christians had found the Old Testament relevant, but had had difficulty applying the teachings of Jesus to wartime. That, the author claimed, had been a mistake:

> Der grosse Menschentröster Jesus für den Krieg nicht passend? Der Strom seines Evangeliums ungeeignet für diese Zeit der Not? Nie hat das Neue Testament heller geleuchtet als unter den Brandfackeln dieses Krieges.[26]

The concept of Jesus' passion as the ultimate example of self-sacrifice was central to an article by Professor Hans Preuss

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[24]The essay under discussion was by a certain Ortloph and was included in Christentum und Gegenwart, a book edited by Drs. Geyer and Rittelmeyer. It was discussed in "Kleine Mitteilungen - Bayern," AELKZ 42 (16 Oct. 1914):996.

[25]The Kirchenzeitung reviewer disagreed with Rittelmeyer at this point, and asked: "Wären dann nicht tapfere Monisten und Atheisten ebenso 'Gott lieb und wert und innerlich ganz nahe'?", 996.

[26]"Vorwort" II AELKZ 2 (8 Jan. 1915):25.

in 1915, entitled "Deutschlands Passion." Preuss claimed that Germany's current tribulations were analogous to the sufferings of Christ. Like Jesus, Germany had been betrayed, and although innocent, was oppressed and afflicted by her enemies. In Preuss' analogy, the Russian Czar represented Pilate, Serbia was Barrabas, and England played the role of the Jewish High Priests. Italy was Germany's Judas, and the part of Peter had been played by the foreign intellectuals who had enjoyed Germany's hospitality, but denied her in her hour of need. As for the Turks, they were likened to those strangers who remained with Christ until the end.[27] Preuss ended his comparison on a positive note; if Germany's "passion" were a parallel to Christ's, she could joyfully look forward to her own Ostersieg and the destruction of her enemies.

At least one theologian wrote to the Kirchenzeitung criticizing Preuss' article,[28] on the grounds that it was inappropriate and wrong to compare a sinful, earthly Volk with Christ. Preuss, however, retorted that his article had elicited letters of approval from various "kirchlich hochangesehene Männer."[29] The fact that it had been published at all indicates that he was telling the truth.

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[27]Hans Preuss, "Deutschlands Passion," AELKZ 38, (17 Sept. 1915):901-5. This was the same Hans Preuss who wrote the series of articles comparing Hitler and Luther. See p. 34. He seems to have had a penchant for far-fetched analogies.

[28]Ch. Römer, "Noch einmal 'Deutschlands Passion'," AELKZ 45 (5 Nov. 1915):1069-70.

[29]Ibid.

Laible also entered the discussion of the role of Jesus in wartime theology. Jesus, Laible insisted, had demonstrated intense patriotic loyalty to his Volk. He pointed out that Jesus knew the stories of his ancestors, wept over Jerusalem, and participated in the religious life of his nation.[30]

The fact that so much of Jesus' teaching centred on love and peace did not seem to daunt the wartime theologians. Jesus' command, "Love your neighbor as yourself," was interpreted, not as a denunciation of war, but rather as its justification. According to the theologian Adolf Deissmann, love meant one should defend one's neighbor, with violence if necessary.[31] Reinhold Seeberg, a professor of Systematic Theology in Berlin, explained that love for one's neighbor took precedence over love for one's enemy, since, when two commands conflict, one should obey that which was closest.[32] Professor Walther added the weight of Luther's teachings to these rationalizations. In Walther's analysis, war was an expression of love:

> Was die Liebe fordert, das ist göttlich, wenn es auch Worten der Bibel zu widersprechen scheinen sollte. Darum soll man kämpfen für das Recht, weil die Liebe dies fordern kann. Und erst dann ist es ein christlicher Kampf ums Recht, wenn die christliche Liebe dazu treibt. Nur wenn der Krieg als Pflicht der Liebe verstanden werden kann, darf von seiner Berechtigung auch für den Christen die Rede sein.

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[30] Laible, "Jesus und sein Volk," AELKZ 12 (24 March 1916):277.

[31] See Bailey, 131.

[32] Ibid., 132.

> Dann aber ist er nicht nur berechtigt, sondern heilige Pflicht.[33]

Pacifism had never been a tenet of Lutheranism, and the theologians had little difficulty dealing with Jesus' teachings on peace. A Kirchenzeitung article in August 1914 referred to pacifists as Friedensfanatiker, and addressed them with Luther's condemnation of the pacifists in his own time:

> "Es schreien etliche Prediger freventlich vom Türken: man solle dem Türken nicht widerstehen darum, dass Rache den Christen verboten sei. Dies ist eine aufrührische Rede, welche nicht soll gelitten oder gestattet werden." ... Nur wer um des Raubens und des Gewinns willen in den Krieg zieht, "macht aus einem guten Werk ihm selbst ein böses," auch wenn er im Gehorsam gegen die Obrigkeit ins Feld rückt.[34]

The role of Jesus, like the nature of God, became an issue of contention in the 1930s, between the "German Christians" and representatives of a more orthodox Christian faith. The orthodox theologians found themselves in a difficult position. Since they, and others of their persuasion, had advocated a heroic Jesus figure during the First World War, and had de-emphasized his teachings of love and peace, they had few defenses against a movement which carried this "transformation" of Jesus a step further. Radicals

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[33] W. Walther, "Der jetzige Krieg und Dr. Luther," AELKZ 42 (16 Oct. 1914):981.

[34] "Was sagt Luther über den Krieg" I, AELKZ 34 (21 Aug. 1914):800. See also W. Elert, "Kant und der ewige Friede," AELKZ 1 (1 Jan. 1915):11; and A. Schraeder, "Christentum und Weltfriede," AELKZ 1 (4 Jan. 1918):10. Elert and Schraeder agreed that Jesus' teachings of peace referred primarily to the peace between God and mankind, and only secondarily to peace among men.

like the Tübingen professor Wilhelm Hauer, who rejected the concept of the crucified Christ as "ein Ärgernis und eine Torheit,"[35] could easily be dismissed as "liberal individualists" or heathens, but it was more difficult to combat the supposedly Christian views of the "German Christians."

The "German Christians" were not united in their notion of the place of Jesus in their "theology." Some of them, like the Pastor Mielsch, demanded: "Darlegung des heldischen Opfertodes Jesu in den Spuren deutscher Mystik,"[36] while the "Twenty-eight Theses of the 'German Christians' in Saxony" professed a belief in Jesus as "die entscheidende Offenbarung Gottes,"[37] and contended:

> Der Streit, ob Jesus Jude oder Arier war, erreicht das Wesen Jesu überhaupt nicht. Jesus ist nicht Träger menschlicher Art, sondern enthüllt uns in seiner Person Gottes Art.[38]

This assertion, however, was also heretical, since, as the theological faculty in Leipzig pointed out, according to Lutheran doctrine, Jesus was both human and divine.[39]

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[35] "Wer ist Wilhelm Hauer?," AELKZ 11 (16 March 1934):255.

[36] quoted in Laible, "'Deutschkirche' und Deutsche Christen'," AELKZ 34 (25 Aug. 1933):786.

[37] quoted in Laible, "Der neuen Kurs in der lutherischen Kirche Sachsen," AELKZ 51 (22 Dec. 1933):1195.

[38] The "twenty-eight Theses" were adopted in December 1933, but dropped in 1934. These theses included demands for a Volkskirche based on Blut und Rasse, acceptance of the Aryan Clause, acceptance of the Old Testament, but recognition of its inferiority to the New Testament. See Hermelink, 58-61.

[39] "Die theologische Fakultät Leipzig und die 28 Thesen der sächsischen Landeskirche," AELKZ 2 (12 Jan. 1934):34-8.

The orthodox theologians attempted to defend the figure of Jesus from the "German Christian" onslaught. In doing so, however, they often played into the hands of the proponents of völkisch Christianity by adopting their criteria, and trying to prove that the figure of Jesus was compatible with the National Socialist state and its ideology. Professor Adolf Köberle, for example, argued that the heroic aspect of Jesus' message, especially his death on the cross, had been severely neglected by modern theology:

> Dieser Mangel hat nicht wenig dazu beigetragen, dass wir mehr eine Frauen--statt eine Männerkirche, mehr eine Kirche der Alten, statt eine Kirche der Jungen und Alten geworden sind.[40]

Laible, on the other hand, argued that "das Jesusbild lässt sich nicht ändern, auch nicht 'arisch' ändern,"[41] but used the criterion of Deutschtum to support his plea for a return to orthodox Lutheranism:

> Luther kannte noch nicht die heutigen Rassenforschungen aber er war mit jedem Blutstropfen ein Deutscher, dachte deutsch, predigte deutsch, hat deutsche Lieder gesungen. Diesen 'deutschen' Mann müssten alle Deutschgesinnten noch heute hören.[42]

By 1937, Laible recognized his mistake in trying to find grounds for reconciliation with the "German Christians." The victim in such a compromise, he realized, would be Christ-centred Christianity. Indeed, the church had already lost its perspective.

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[40] Adolf Köberle, "Das Wort vom Kreuz und die religiöse Lage der Gegenwart" II, AELKZ 31 (4 Aug. 1933):709.

[41] Laible, "'Deutschkirche' und 'Deutsche Christen'," AELKZ 34 (25 Aug.1933):786.

[42] Ibid.

Instead of preaching the message of Jesus, it had descended into the "arena" of the state:

> Der Kompass war so verrückt, dass man nicht mehr die Christusfrage voranstellte: was dünkt dich um Christus? Sondern die Nationalfrage: was dünkt dich un den Staat? Nicht dass man hätte Christus verleugnen wollen, o nein! Man wollte nur eine "zeitgemässe" Kirche aufrichten, einen schönen Zusammenhang zwischen Staat und Kirche herstellen.[43]

Laible continued, however, to profess loyalty to the National Socialist state, and used the example of Jesus' obedience to illustrate that the state had no need to fear the church:

> Wenn irgendeinem Staat Gefahr droht, von Jesus her gewiss nicht. Er will nichts vom Staat, mischt sich nicht in Dinge des Staats; sein Reich ist "nicht von dieser Welt". Wohl lebt er im Staate und seine Jünger leben im Staat, er gibt ihnen auch Anweisung, wie sie im Staat leben sollen:"Gebet dem Kaiser was des Kaisers ist",sagt er.[44]

Jesus, Laible contended, had taught his followers to be true to the state, by instructing them to obey God's laws:

> Wer Gottes Gebote hält, mischt sich nicht unter die "Aufrührerischen", kann nicht gegen den Staat sein, denn die Obrigkeit ist "Gottes Ordnung".[45]

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[43]Laible, "Vorwort" II, AELKZ 2 (8 Jan. 1937):25.

[44]Laible, "Vorwort," AELKZ 1, (9 June 1939):1. By this time it is difficult to tell to what extent such professions of loyalty were sincere expressions of support of National Socialism, and to what extent they were motivated by self-preservation. Laible must have been concerned about the fate of the Kirchenzeitung--its publication had just been permitted again, after a suspension of six months. He would, no doubt, have been loathe to jeopardize its chances for continued circulation.

[45]Ibid.,2.

Jesus' teachings of love and peace did not feature in the Kirchenzeitung articles of the 1930s. There was one short denunciation of pacifist attitudes in 1934,[46] but in general these issues were not addressed. This omission is symptomatic of the sterility of orthodox Lutheran theology in the "Third Reich." The theological creativity which did exist during the 1930s was in opposition to the nationalist, orthodox theologians. Under the guidance of Barth and Bonhoeffer, this creativity served the Confessing Church. Interestingly, the "new theology" which grew out of this period focussed on the figure of Jesus, that figure whose role had been so disputed in the wartime theology, and in the theology of the "German Christians."

The question of the Old Testament and its significance in the modern Christian church took a different form in 1914 and 1933 than did the discussions of God and Jesus. In the latter cases, trends already evident in the wartime theology of 1914 to 1918 were appropriated and exaggerated by proponents of völkisch Christianity, while orthodox theologians attempted to attack the most extreme positions from within a framework of concession. The attitudes of the "German Christians" towards the Old Testament, however, were diametrically opposed to those of the World War I theologians. The Old Testament was an issue of contention between the "German

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[46] H. Steinlein, "Unlutherischer Pazifismus in der Frage der Notwehr," AELKZ 9 (2 March 1914):202.

Christians" and the orthodox theologians, from the very beginning of the Glaubensbewegung Deutscher Christen.

In 1914, and, to a lesser extent throughout the First World War, the Old Testament proved an invaluable source of inspiration for wartime theology. The Kirchenzeitung rejoiced in August 1914:

> Der Krieg hat uns das Alte Testament wieder auf den Tisch gelegt. Doch nicht der Krieg, Gott hat es getan; das heilige, aber hochverachtete, kaum mehr benutzte, kaum noch gekannte Buch steigt aus dem Grabe heraus und kommt zu neuen Ehren. Die Kirchen tönen wider von den Stimmen der Propheten und Psalmen, von den Kriegern und Siegen des Volkes Gottes.[47]

It was the warlike spirit of the Old Testament, precisely that element which previously had been considered somehow offensive, which now made it so valuable. Favorite Old Testament texts came from the Psalms and Isaiah. Psalm 46:1 was frequently used: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble," as was Isaiah 40:1ff: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."[48]

At times very specific parallels were drawn to the Old Testament. A 1915 article entitled "'Gottes Mühlen mahlen langsam'" used the Old Testament to prove that God intended to punish England:

> Das Wünschen und Hoffen unzähliger in deutschen und anderen

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[47]"Das Alte Testament und der Krieg," AELKZ 35 (28 Aug. 1914):810.

[48]Pressel, 34.

> Landen geht darauf, dass der Gott, des die Rache ist, baldigst erscheine und wir es in der allernächsten Zeit mit Augen sehen dürfen, wie die Macht Englands zertrümmert werde und sein Weltreich in die Brüche gehe. Wir wünschen und erhoffen das von der gerechten Vergeltung Gottes um so zuversichtlicher, als die Worte des Propheten über Moab buchstäblich von Albion gelten: "Man hat immer gesagt von dem stolzen Moab, dass er sehr stolz sei.... Moab ist von seiner Jugend auf sicher gewesen,...und nie ins Gefängnis gezogen.... Aber der Herr spricht.... Es kommt die Zeit, dass ich ihnen will Schröter schicken, die sie aussschrotten sollen und ihre Fässer ausleeren und ihre Krüge zerschmettern.[49]

When the Old Testament came under attack by the "German Christians" and other anti-Semitic proponents of völkisch Christianity in the 1930s, the orthodox theologians rushed to its defense. The Old Testament, they argued again and again, was an integral part of God's revelation. As in the disputes about God and Jesus, however, the "middle front" theologians borrowed aspects of their opponents' worldview to support their own position. Anti-Semitism, which was the basis for the "German Christians'" rejection of the Old Testament, was also frequently used by the theologians in

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[49] U. Kinzler, "Gottes Mühlen mahlen langsam," AELKZ 2 (8 Jan. 1915):42. See Isaiah 16:6 and Jeremiah 48:11-30. There were, however, warnings in the Kirchenzeitung against such flagrant misuses of the Old Testament. See for example "Vorwort" II, AELKZ 2 (8 Jan. 1915):25; and Johannes Haussleiter, "Die Aufgaben der Christen für den Frieden," AELKZ 37 (10 Sept. 1915):872. In 1939 Martin Doerne criticized the way the Old Testament had been used during World War I, in "Die Verkündigung der Kirche im Kriege," AELKZ 20 (20 Oct. 1939):358.

> "Die Kirche hat namentlich zu Beginn des Weltkrieges, zu viel christlich-politische Geschichtsphilosophie...einfliessen lassen. Und wir empfinden es heute als eine seltsame Tragik, dass an solcher Vermischung von Volkssache und Reichsgottes eine übersteigerte und missbräuchliche Verwendung des Alten Testaments erheblich mitgewirkt hat."

in the Kirchenzeitung as an argument in favor of the Old Testament.

The "German Christians" were not united in their stance on the Old Testament, but, to varying degrees, they all discredited it as a Jewish myth. The "Twenty-eight Theses of the 'German Christians' in Sachsen" accepted the Old Testament as having some value, but primarily as a justification of anti-Semitism:

> Wichtig bleibt das Alte Testament, weil es die Geschichte und den Verfall eines Volkes überliefert, das trotz Gottes Offenbarung sich immer wieder von ihm trennte.[50]

Some of the "German Christians" took a much harder line, and referred to the Old Testament faith as:

> "Ein aus jüdischem Urschleim entstandenes Gottesungetüm satanischer Art, das aus der Erde ein Leichenfeld schaffen will und nur dem Judenvolk gnädig ist."[51]

Theologians like Laible eagerly defended the Old Testament and attempted to prove that acceptance of it was not tantamount to pro-Semitism. It was erroneous to reject the Old Testament on the grounds of anti-Semitism, Laible contended, since that book, "als Buch Gottes je und je im Kampfe stand gegen die Entartungen des Judenvolks."[52]

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[50] quoted in Laible, "Der neue Kurs in der lutherischen Kirche Sachsens," AELKZ 51 (22 Dec. 1933):1195.

[51] quoted in Laible, "Vorwort" II, AELKZ 2 (8 Jan. 1937):27.

[52] Laible, "Zur Judenfrage der Gegenwart," AELKZ 31 (4 Aug. 1933):717. See also Laible, "Vorwort" AELKZ 1 (9 June 1939):3. In 1939, Laible used the same argument for the entire Bible: "Die Bibel ist...kein 'Heldenbuch der Juden', sondern eine 'Chronik ihrer Sünden."

The most extreme example in the Kirchenzeitung of the use of anti-Semitism as an argument for retaining the Old Testament, was an article by Johannes Fliell, a missionary in New Guinea:

> Wieder einmal soll also das Kind mit dem Bade ausgeschüttet werden, um der entarteten Juden der Gegenwart willen soll das Alte Testament der Heiligen Schrift verworfen werden....
>
> "Kreuzige, kreuzige ihn." schrieen sie und verwarfen ihren und aller Welt Heiland.--"sein Blut komme über uns und unsere Kinder!" Es ist geschehen bis zum heutigen Tag....
>
> Die Juden im ganzen Feinde des Kreuzes Christi; dass sie nur nicht unser deutsches Volk besiegen zur Christusfeindschaft! In Russland vollendete Gottesfeindschaft; in Deutschland droht die Feindschaft des Christus und seines Kreuzes und damit das Antichristentum. Der Juden Unglück ist ihre Kreuzesfeindschaft, der Deutschen Unglück würde es, wenn sie darin den Juden gleich würden.
>
> Das Alte Testament ist uns zur Lehre geschrieben in ungeschminkter Wahrhaftigkeit durch Antrieb des heiligen Gottesgeistes, das Böse zu fliehen, dem Guten nachzufolgen im Glauben und Demut.[53]

Those who supported the Old Testament as an essential part of God's word had the final say in the Kirchenzeitung. One of the last series of articles before the paper was discontinued in 1941 was entitled, "Der Gott des Alten Testaments." In four instalments, the author outlined the indispensability of the Old Testament to the message of Jesus.[54]

One aspect of Christian theology which was affected by World War I, but did not play a significant role in the 1930s, was

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[53]Johannes Fliell, "Judenfrage und Altes Testament," AELKZ 50 (16 Dec. 1938):1106.

[54]See for example AELKZ 17 (25 April 1941):182.

eschatology. Eschatological hopes were expressed most strongly in 1915 and again at the end of the war. In early 1915, Ihmels credited the war with reawakening the "Lehrstück von den letzten Dingen."[55] Seven months later, an article entitled "Der Sinn des Weltkriegs" opened by quoting Jesus' description of the end times in Matthew 24:7-8: "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.... All these are the beginnings of sorrows. The author interpreted the World War as the first sign of the times.[56] The meditations throughout the advent season of 1915 had eschatological overtones. The texts for 26 November, 3 December, and 10 December were Matthew 4:17, Matthew 26:64, and Matthew 11:3:[57]

> "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
>
> "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."
>
> "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"

The reason eschatology was emphasized in 1915 had to do with theologians' attempts to impose a religious interpretation on events, and to sustain the energy and passion which had characterized the opening months of the war. Those last months of 1914 had been so intense, so challenging, that theologians had no way to increase

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[55] Ihmels, "Krieg und Theologie," AELKZ 18 (30 April, 1915): 414.

[56] "Der Sinn des Weltkriegs," AELKZ 45 (5 Nov. 1915):1061.

[57] AELKZ 48 (26 (Nov. 1915); AELKZ 49 (3 Dec. 1915):1157; AELKZ 50 (10 Dec. 1915):1181.

the momentum except by interpreting the crisis in eschatological terms. When neither the world nor the war ended in 1915, the number of eschatological messages dwindled again.[58]

The end of the war in 1918 gave rise to another retreat into eschatological hopes. Defeat was somehow too momentous, too catastrophic, to be comprehensible in earthly terms. Hopes and fears of the end times provided a spiritual context in which to interpret the calamity of defeat. On 25 October 1918, Laible expressed his belief that the defeat of Germany signified the beginning of the end times:

> Siegen also die Feinde Deutschlands--nicht vorübergehend, sondern mit seiner Zerschmetterung-, so siegt das Unrecht, die Lüge, das Geld, der Mord; und besiegt wird das Vertrauen auf Gott, die Hoffnung auf seinen Beistand. Das ist nicht die Weise, wie Gott bisher die Welt regierte. Stellt er diese Weise ab, so stellt er die Weltgeschichte ab, und die Weissagung kommt zur Erfüllung: "Wenn die Ungerechtigheit wird überhand nehmen." Es geht zu Ende, nicht nur mit Deutschland, sondern mit den Völkern, mit der Welt.[59]

The Kirchenzeitung articles of 1933, like those of 1914, but in contrast to those of 1915 and 1918, were devoid of eschatological emphases. The new regime was greeted initially with such enthusiasm and anticipation of the new age dawning, that teachings of the end of the world seemed irrevelant. The four horsemen of the apocalypse

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[58]Occasionally, articles with eschatological overtones still appeared in 1916 and 1917. See for example Gottschalk, "Ich bin bei euch alle Tage," AELKZ 22 (2 June 1916):515; and Johannes Haussleiter, "Die apokalyptischen Reiter, " AELKZ 5 (L Feb. 1918):98.

[59]Laible, "Bleibt noch eine Hoffnung in dieser schweren Zeit?," AELKZ 43 (25 Oct. 1918):941.

are all agents of destruction: conquest, war, famine, death. It is in times of adversity and despair that eschatological hopes surface, not in times of optimism such as 1914 and 1933. Furthermore, with its notion of a thousand year Reich, National Socialist ideology had attempted to secularize eschatological ideas.

There was, no doubt, a revived interest in eschatology during the Second World War, but it was not yet evident in the Kirchenzeitung, which was discontinued in early 1941. The major article to discuss the end times was Laible's 1939 "Vorwort":

> Wir müssen wieder eschatologische Kirche werden,... voller Tatkraft für die Zeit, aber die Augen in die Zukunft gerichtet, nach dem, der vom Himmel kommen soll, zu richten die Lebendigen und die Toten.... Was ist denn die eschatologische Kirche? Zum ersten ist sie ecclesia crucis, Kirche des Kreuzes.[60]

The church must strive, not for earthly glory, but for honor in heaven. Laible added a criticism of the Confessing Church:

> Nur dass es kein selbstgezimmertes Kreuz sei, dass sie nicht mit selbstgeschaffenen Märtyrerkronen prange.... Vielleicht gehört es zu der "Stunde der Versuchung" der letzten Zeit, dass die Kirche zwischen zwei Abgründen wandeln muss, dem der Verleugnung und des Verrats und dem des selbstgesuchten Martyriums, dass sie den schlichten Pfad aus den Augen verliert, der die Fussstapfen Jesu trägt.[61]

This was the position of the orthodox theologians throughout the years of the National Socialist regime. They were trapped between two extremes, both of which they considered unacceptable. Laible failed to mention, however, the dangers inherent in the middle position: the danger of inaction, and the danger of self-compromise.

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[60] Laible, "Vorwort" II AELKZ (16 June 1939):28.

[61] Ibid., Wilhelm Walther accused the Confessing Church of self-inflicted martydom, as well, in "Des Christen Kreuz und Christi Kreuz nach Luther's Lehre," AELKZ 8 (28 July 1939):163.

CONCLUSION

> Das wahre Christentum ist mit der Zeitlage, wie sie der Krieg geschaffen hat, schlechthin unvereinbar.... Es ist eine Vergewaltigung des Evangeliums wenn man aus ihm eine Rechtfertigung oder Idealisierung all der Tugenden herauslesen will, die heute gebraucht werden zur Erringung politischer oder kriegerischer Erfolge.
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> -Pastor Francke, Berlin, 1915[1]

> [Wenn das Gewissen zu reden anfängt], da hilft nur Gott, da braucht man Religion.... Welchen sittlichen Halt hat ein Volk, wenn es an keinen persönlichen Gott mehr glaubt, kein ewiges Gericht mehr scheut? Wird nicht die Bestie im Menschen erwachen, werden sich nicht die Gefängnisse und Zuchthäuser füllen, weil die göttlichen Hemmungen fehlen?
>
> -Wilhelm Laible, 1938[2]

The study of the responses of the German Protestant theologians represented in the official organ of the Lutheran Conference, the Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Kirchenzeitung, to the two national crises in modern Germany--the First World War and the National Socialist revolution--has shown that the theologians followed the trends of the nation. In 1914, the theologians adopted the nationalist vocabulary and values of their times, and, with a few exceptions, enthusiastically supported the government's policies. They patriotically defended the fatherland, naively believing that Germany had been attacked by envious, vindictive enemies. In 1933, the "German Christians" adopted the vocabluary and ideology of the National Socialists,

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[1] quoted in Hammer, 304.

[2] Laible, "Vorwort," AELKZ 1 (7 Jan. 1938):5.

and attempted to make Christianity conform to the trends of their time. The Kirchenzeitung theologians also welcomed the "legal revolution" of the National Socialists. Along with the DNVP to whom they belonged, they viewed the NSDAP as the "shock troops" who would clear the way for the fulfillment of their own political goals: the destruction of the republic, and the return to the "good old days" of the authoritarian state. By allying with the National Socialists, they were doing nothing less than trying to "cast out Satan with Beelzebub." They began to realize--even before 1933, in the last election of 1932--that the Nazis' goals and tactics for building a new Germany differed from their own. However, once the National Socialists came to power, as long as the new regime did not reveal its true face, the theologians felt relieved and satisfied with the destruction of the republic.

To the present-day reader of the Kirchenzeitung, there appears to be little difference between the theology of the "national Protestants" during World War I, and the völkisch "theology" of the "German Christians" and their sympathizers in the 1930s. The one, like the other, appears not only theologically and intellectually ludicrous, but often blasphemous. In spite of the similarity at first glance, however, there were also differences, in the situations as well as in the responses of the theologians.

The political situations to which the theologians responded in 1914 and in 1933 were very different. In 1914, Germany was

at war with almost the entire world. Given their traditions and their education, it was natural for the theologians to join in the common front against the foreign enemy. Even the workers and the Social Democrats responded to this need for solidarity. The theologians, moreover, temporarily set aside their theological differences, and established their own version of the Burgfriede, with orthodox and liberal factions uniting to defend the honor of the fatherland.

In 1933, on the other hand, the crisis was an internal one. It was a revolution, not a foreign threat, to which the theologians responded, and there was no immediate need to conclude a Burgfriede among the theological groups. Moreover, the old antagonism between liberal and orthodox theologians, though still in existence, had, by 1933, been overshadowed by the emergence of a third force, the new dialectic theology of Karl Barth and his followers.

The general Zeitgeist of 1914 was also different from that of 1933. In 1914, the theologians shared the pessimism characteristic of the fin de siècle mood. They welcomed the war as a way out of the impasse which they believed plagued their society. They hoped to capitalize on the impetus of the war to bring about a spiritual and religious renewal in Germany. Still, in spite of their tendency to look back nostalgically at the fictitious "good old days," the theologians--and the church as a whole--felt fundamentally at home in the authoritarian Wilhelmine state.

In the period before 1933, however, the theologians were not as unanimous in their attitudes towards the Weimar Republic.

The liberal theologians came to terms with, and sometimes even actively supported the republic, but the orthodox, German Nationalist theologians of the Kirchenzeitung hated it passionately. Even though these "right-wing" theologians greeted the National Socialist seizure of power enthusiastically, however, that enthusiasm was neither as naive nor as intense as the optimism of 1914. They welcomed the National Socialist revolution as the first step towards a restoration of the "good old days," but their hopes were tinged with misgivings about the nature of the new regime, and anxieties about the future of the church.

In theological terms, too, there were differences between the responses of 1914 and 1933. The theologians of 1914 had distorted the biblical message, and participated in the Vergewaltigung of Christian theology to conform to the imperatives of the nation at war. Despite this misuse of theology, however, the liberal as well as the orthodox theologians continued to proclaim their acceptance of the entire message of the Bible.

It was a different case with the "German Christians" in the 1930s. They not only distorted and perverted the biblical message, they attempted to dismantle it, and reconstruct it in the image of their own ideology. They rejected the Old Testament, and tried to purge Christianity of its Jewish elements, in order to create a religion based on Blut und Rasse.

The similarities and differences between the theologians'

responses in 1914 and 1933 raise the issue of continuity. The concept of continuity is admittedly a questionable one; continuity and discontinuity always exist side by side in any period of time. Still, there was unmistakable evidence of continuity in the orthodox Lutheran church from 1914 to 1933. The subordination of theology to national goals and values during World War I helped prepare the way for a more radical violation of theology in the National Socialist years. At least one theologian contributing to the Kirchenzeitung in 1939 recognized this continuity, and conceded:

> [Es] bleibt wahr, dass dis Kirche, namentlich zu Beginn des Weltkrieges, zu viel christlich- politische Geschichtsphilosophie hat einfliessen lassen.[3]

By the time of World War II, the theologians had become, in a sense, the captives of the national forces they had helped to foster. By ignoring the tension between a Christian worldview, with its emphasis on salvation and eternity, and the nationalist worldview, with its emphasis on power and action in this world, the theologians during World War I deprived their theology of its divine message and its intellectual integrity. It became just another propagandistic tool for the victory of the fatherland. Theology, thus degraded, was in danger of being placed in the service of any movement which claimed to further the interests of Volk und Vaterland.

It has sometimes been claimed that the "German Christians" were the logical heirs of liberal theology, which had applied rationalist

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[3]Martin Doerne, "Die Verkündigung der Kirche im Kriege," AELKZ 20 (20 Oct. 1939):358.

criticism to the Bible and the principles of Christianity.[4] It does not seem justified, however, to draw a clear line of causality from the liberal theology of the early twentieth century to the völkisch pseudo-theology of the "German Christians." The "German Christians" themselves denounced liberalism, in both the political and theological spheres, and referred in their official publications to the "dämonische Mächte des Liberalismus und Marxismus."[5] That in itself, admittedly, does not exclude continuity between the liberal theologians and the "German Christians"; the socialists, who are generally considered the "heirs" of political liberalism have also traditionally been hostile to their liberal precursors. However, the German liberal theologians themselves unambiguously rejected National Socialism in the 1930s, and, like their most influential spokesman Martin Rade, opposed any attempts to impose its ideology on the church. The liberal theologians' hostility to the National Socialists was, to a large extent, an expression of their political affiliation with the republic,[6] and they did not adapt either their theological or their political values to the völkisch trends of the 1930s. From investigating the Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische

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[4]For example, a 1936 Flugschrift signed by several Saxon theologians asserted:

> "Ganz allgemein kann...gesagt werden, dass die Bewegung [Glaubensbewegung 'Deutscher Christen'] auf religiösem Gebiet einen Rückfall in den Liberalismus bedeutet. Ihr theologisches Gedankengut, vor allem ihre Bibelkritik, ist zumeist Restbestand der überlebten liberalen Theologie."

"Kirche in Not: Flugschrift aus Sachsen," AELKZ 4 (26 Jan. 1934):87. See also M. Reu, "Die Kirche und die soziale Frage," AELKZ 9 (28 Feb. 1936):195.

[5]Joachim Hossenfelder, Unser Kampf (Berlin: Verlag Max Grevemeyer, 1933),18,27,28.

[6]van Norden, in Klessmann und Pingel,103.

Kirchenzeitung, however, one gets the impression that the "German Christians" had more in common with the "national Protestants" of World War I than with the liberal theologians.

In spite of the theoretical unwritten rule that historians should remain purely objective, the ethical question of responsibility cannot be avoided in this comparison. According to the French philosopher Julien Benda, theologians have the same responsibility to society as do secular intellectuals: to protect "civilization" by depreciating the "lay passions" of their contemporaries and extolling those "advantages which are beyond the material."[7] Benda, in 1927, denounced the European intellectuals of the World War I period for failing to live up to this responsibility, and castigated the churchmen specifically for participating in this "treason of the intellectuals":

> [The Churchmen], who for centuries have exhorted men at least theoretically to deaden the feeling of their differences in order to take cognizance of each other in the divine essence which brings all men together, have now come to praise them, according to where the sermon is given, for their "fidelity to the French soul," for the "immutability of their German consciousness," for the "fervour of their Italian hearts."[8]

The problem of the responsibility of the church in its relationship with the state and its existence within the state, goes back to the beginnings of Christianity. St. Paul addressed the issue in the thirteenth chapter of his letter to the Romans, which

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[7] Benda, 111.

[8] Ibid., 65.

begins, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers." Although the established church--both Protestant and Catholic--has generally followed the trends of the times, and has often involved itself in politics in an unbiblical way, the question of the church's priorities has remained. The priority of the church is God and the message of the Bible, and that priority implies a responsibility. Martin Luther's assessment of that responsibility was that obedience to God must take precedence over obedience to secular authorities.[9] The Lutheran church, however, especially in times of crisis, tended to over-emphasize the concept that authority comes from God, and to extol the authoritarian state,[10] without remembering that Luther clearly set a limit on the extent on that authority. Still, some theologians were aware that the church had an important responsibility in the state:

> Denn wenn auch die Kirche mit der Politik selbst nichts zu schaffen hat, so kann es ihr nicht gleichgültig sein, welche sittlichen oder unsittlichen Grundsätze in jener zur Geltung und Ausführung kommen. Denn die Moral bildet den gemeinsamen Boden für Staat und Kirche, und die Kirche ist berufen, die Hüterin der Moral auch im Staatsleben zu sein.[11]

It has sometimes been argued that the responses of the

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[9] See "Von weltlicher Obrigkeit, wie weit man ihr Gehorsam schuldig sei," in Luther, 7:223-74.

[10] Generalsuperintendent Dibelius, for example, allegedly claimed in an interview with Der Spiegel, that for him authority had ceased in 1918, with the end of the monarchy.

[11] "Deutschland um Neujahr," AELKZ 9 (4 March 1870):161. My underlining. See also Ihmels, "Krieg und Theologie," AELKZ 19 (7 May 1915):435.

German Protestant theologians to World War I were more "noble" and less irresponsible than those to the National Socialist regime and the Second World War.[12] The church itself took this stance. The German church did not admit to having behaved wrongly during World War I, and did not issue any declarations to that effect after 1918. On the contrary, in the post-war years, the Kirchenzeitung referred proudly to the patriotic stance of the church from 1914 to 1918. After World War II, however, the German church issued public statements, such as the Stuttgart Declaration of October 1945, expressing guilt for having shunned its responsibility and contributed to the suffering inflicted on the world by Germany.[13]

Admittedly, the "German Christians" in the 1930s violated the biblical message more flagrantly than had the World War theologians. While the theologians during the First World War had distorted Christian theology in an attempt to accommodate it to the problems of their day, the "German Christians" had undertaken what amounted to the complete destruction of theology. What the theologians of both 1914 and 1933 had in common, however, was that, like the other intellectuals of their times--and like those intellectuals accused by Benda of "treason"--they followed the common trends of their nation. It was always only a few individuals, usually "outsiders" who were not part of the "establishment,"

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[12] Bailey, for example, implies this on page 478.

[13] See Gutteridge,293-4,229-301; Klessmann and Pingel,149; Conway,332; and Herman,137. One of the authors of this document was Martin Niemöller, himself a U-Boot commander in World War I, and one of the most influential figures in the Confessing Church from its beginnings.

who managed to think independently and see clearly the dangers which threatened the established professional group.

The "sin" of the theologians, then, both during World War I and under the National Socialist regime, was their violation of the message of Luke 12:48:

> "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him will they ask the more."

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APPENDIX A

Biographical data on some important figures in this thesis:

Barth, Karl. 1886-1968. Karl Barth, a Swiss pastor, became well-known in theological circles with the publication of Der Römerbrief in 1918. He attacked liberal theology, which was very prevalent at the time, and founded a new dialectical theology. Barth's teachings emphasized the power and mystery of God--the "totally other"--and condemned the German nationalism of the established Lutheran church. Between 1923 and 1933, Barth expressed his views in his journal, Zwischen den Zeiten. In 1933, he founded the journal Theologische Existenz heute, which strongly opposed the emergent "German Christians." From 1921-25, Barth had been at the University of Göttingen, as Professor of Reformed Theology. He had then spent five years as Professor for Dogmatics and Exegisis of the New Testament in Münster, and, in 1930, had become Professor of Systematic Theology in Bonn. In 1935, Barth was removed from the Bonn post, for refusing to swear an oath of allegiance to Hitler. He then returned to Basel and continued work on his multi-volume Kirchliche Dogmatik.

Bodelschwingh, Friedrich von. 1877-1946. Friedrich von Bodelschwingh studied theology at Bonn, Basel, Tübingen, and Greifswald. In 1910, he was chosen to succeed his father as the head of the large church hospital and welfare center in Bethel bei Bielefeld, Westphalia. Bodelschwingh devoted himself to the improvement and

expansion of the center, which specialized, among other things, in the care of epileptics. On 27 May 1933, Bodelschwingh was chosen by the representatives of the Landeskirchen to be the first Reichsbischof. Due to the installment of August Jäger as Staatskommissar for the Evangelical Church in Prussia, however, Bodelschwingh was unable to fulfill his mandate in this position. He resigned less than one month after he had been appointed. Bodelschwingh was an outspoken opponent of the National Socialists' euthanasia program, and refused to relinquish any of the patients in his institution to the government authorities.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. 1906-1945. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was the son of the psychiatrist Karl Bonhoeffer. He studied theology at Tübingen and Berlin, and was the university chaplain in Berlin from 1931 to 1933. From 1933 until 1935, he was pastor of a German Lutheran church in London. Bonhoeffer returned to Germany to be director of the illegal seminary of the Confessing Church in Finkenwalde. He became involved in the resistance movement and the plot to assassinate Hitler on 20 July 1944. Bonhoeffer was arrested in 1943, and subsequently executed in April 1945.

Dibelius, Friedrich Karl Otto. 1880-1967. After eighteen years in the ministry, Otto Dibelius was appointed General Superintendent of the Prussian church, in 1926. He was dismissed in 1933, and became a leading figure in the Confessing Church.

Dibelius opposed state interference in the affairs of the church, and resisted attempts to "co-ordinate" Christianity and National Socialism. After the war, he was named Bishop of Berlin-Brandenburg in the east zone, and in 1954 became the first German president of the World Council of Churches. In 1960, Dibelius became persona non grata in East Germany for disputing the right of the government there to be considered an "authority" for Christians.

Ihmels, Ludwig. 1858-1933. After studying theology in Leipzig, Erlangen and Göttingen, Ludwig Ihmels served as a pastor, and then as principal of the seminary at Loccum. In 1898 he accepted a post in Erlangen as Professor of Systematic Theology, and four years later he moved to the University of Leipzig. Ihmels was a leading representative of the school of Offenbarungstheologie. This school of theology focussed on the revelations of God as recorded in the Bible. God's revelations are understood, not simply as ways to teach a lesson, but rather as means of describing the fact that God, through Jesus Christ, interacts with, and moves among, human beings. In 1922, Ihmels became the Landesbischof of the church in Saxony.

Jäger, August. 1887-1949. August Jäger, a lawyer, joined the NSDAP in early 1933. In June of that year, he was appointed Staatskommissar of the Prussian Protestant Church, but was removed from that post the following month. Between 1933 and 1939, Jäger

held a series of posts in the National Socialist hierarchy. In 1938 he withdrew officially from the church, and in 1939 he became Administrator and Deputy Governor of Warthegau. In 1945 Jäger was delivered to the Poles and sentenced to hanging. Bishop Dibelius submitted a plea for mercy to the Polish government on Jäger's behalf, but the sentence was not repealed.

Kerrl, Hanns. 1887-1941. Hanns Kerrl joined the NSDAP in 1925, and in 1932 became the first National Socialist President of the Prussian Landtag. He was the Prussian Minister of Justice in March and April 1933. While in this post, Kerrl was responsible for banning Jewish lawyers from practise in Prussia. In November 1933, Kerrl was elected to the Reichstag, and was named Minister without portfolio in 1934. In 1935 Kerrl, a sympathizer of the "German Christians," was appointed Minister for Church Affairs. For all intents and purposes, Kerrl's appointment rendered Reichsbischof Müller superfluous. Müller, however, was not asked to step down. Kerrl attempted to bring the spiritual and pastoral functions of the Protestant church under government control, and thus aroused the opposition of many Protestant theologians.

Laible, Wilhelm. 1856-? Wilhelm Laible, a Leipzig pastor, was the editor of the Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Kirchenzeitung throughout the years 1914 to 1941. Although Laible held this important position for such a long time, there is very little biographical information available on him.

Meiser, Hans Oswald. 1881-1956. After serving for many years as a pastor in Munich, Hans Meiser was elected Landesbischof of Bavaria, in 1933. Meiser opposed National Socialist intervention in the affairs of the church, and was a courageous spokesman for ecclesiastical independence. In October 1934, he was arrested and dismissed from his post, but the staunch support of the Bavarian Church, and the mass demonstrations held in his favor, convinced the government to reinstate him. Meiser was instrumental in maintaining the Bavarian Church as one of the few "intact" churches, throughout the years of National Socialist rule, and in making Bavaria one of the pillars of the Confessing Church.

Müller, Ludwig. 1883-1946. During World War I, Ludwig Müller served as a Navy chaplain in Flanders and Turkey. In 1926, he was stationed to the Military District of Königsberg, and in 1933, he became Hitler's plenipotentiary for questions concerning the Protestant church. Müller was "elected" Reichsbischof on 23 July 1933, one month after Bodelschwingh's resignation. He tried to organize German Protestants against the Confessing Church, but met with little success. The NSDAP did not consistently support Müller, and his influence declined rapidly. Müller became a marginal figure after 1935, and committed suicide in Berlin in March 1946.

Niemöller, Martin. 1892-1984. Martin Niemöller was awarded Pour le Mérite for his achievements as a submarine commander during World War I. After the war, he studied theology and worked for the Inner Mission in Westphalia from 1924 to 1931. From 1931 until his

arrest in 1937, he was the pastor of the Berlin-Dahlem Church. Originally, Niemöller had welcomed National Socialism as a national revival, but by early 1934, he had become disillusioned. He opposed the attempts of the National Socialists and the "German Christians" to subordinate the church to the state, and to impose Nazi ideology on the church. He founded the Pfarrernotbund in 1934 to help protect pastors victimized by the new regime's intervention into church affairs, and by the imposition of the Aryan Clause on the church. Niemöller was a central figure in the Confessing Church, which, by May 1934, had attracted 7000 pastors. Hitler ordered Niemöller's arrest in 1937, and in 1938, he was found guilty of subversive attacks against the state. He was released, but subsequently re-arrested. For the next seven years, Niemöller was held in custody. After the war, Niemöller was elected the President of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau.

Wurm, Theophil. 1868-1953. After many years in the ministry in Württemberg, Theophil Wurm was appointed President of the Württemberg Church in 1929. In 1933, he took the title Landesbischof. He was dismissed in 1934, but, like Bishop Meiser of Bavaria, was reinstated. Wurm held the Württemberg Church together until the end of the war. Throughout the years of the National Socialist rule, Wurm repeatedly protested the inhumanity of the state, and its atrocities against Jews, Poles, and victims of its euthanasia program. In 1945, Wurm was chosen as chairman of the rebuilt Evangelical Church in Germany. Wurm warned the victors of the

war against being destructively accusatory and revengeful towards Germany, and opposed the collective guilt ideas of the Allied Powers.

Zoellner, Wilhelm. 1860-1937. In 1905 Wilhelm Zoellner became the General Superintendent of the church in Westphalia. In 1935, Reichsminister Kerrl instituted an "Eccelsiastical Committee for the Reich" (Reichskirchenausschuss) and a similar committee for Prussia. Zoellner was appointed chairman of the Reichskirchenausschuss. Because Zoellner was moderate, well-respected in the church, and willing to compromise, it was hoped that he would help bring about a peaceful solution to the church struggle. These hopes proved ill-founded; state and police interference in the "Ecclesiastical Committees" rendered them virtually ineffective. For many Germans, Zoellner's failure to effect a reconciliation in the church struggle was the final indication that compromise and cooperation between the church and the National Socialist state were not possible.

APPENDIX B

The German Protestant Theologians and the Question of Resistance:

It is impossible to study the reactions of the German Protestant theologians to the National Socialist regime without confronting the issue of resistance. To what extent can it be said that the Protestant church "resisted" National Socialism? Did the theologians offer political resistance to the state, as well as objecting to its ecclesiastical policies and opposing the heretical perversions of Christianity which stemmed from National Socialist ideology? The way the German theologians dealt with these questions after the war had a profound effect on the church's perception of itself, and its place in society.

There are many problems inherent in a discussion of the "resistance" offered by the theologians to National Socialism. What, after all, constitutes resistance? Must it be thrilling, heroic, and sensational to be valid or even effective? Does one have to be martyred to prove one's sincerity? What about the resistance of an individual such as Bishop Otto Dibelius? Dibelius was a nationalist politically and a conservative socially, but he refused to recognize the morally bankrupt National Socialist regime as an authority for Christians. Later he took the same stance towards the government of East Germany. Even the actions of Wilhelm Laible, the editor of the Allgemeine Evangelisch- Lutherische Kirchenzeitung, while not necessarily characterized by outstanding courage and insight, constituted

a form of resistance. Laible continued publishing the Kirchen-zeitung, despite constant pressure and increasing interference, until 1941, when virtually all church publications were forbidden. He strove to preserve some modicum of independence for the Lutheran journal, even if it was only to assert its own right to existence. Surely even that modest affirmation of ecclesiastical autonomy was a statement of resistance to the National Socialist regime.

To the totalitarian regime, even such hesitant assertions of independence represented a fault in the system, and had to be energetically quashed. This paranoia, and the efficiency and brutality with which the National Socialists decimated their opponents, made overt resistance practically impossible. Once the machinery of the totalitarian state was in motion, resistance, even where it existed, could not be organized on a large scale. Without access to information, or opportunity to meet, to discuss, and to publish, it was extremely difficult to coordinate any resistance movement.

The theologians, moreover, were called to a spiritual ministry. It would be a major leap from their usual sphere of involvement to active political defiance. It was also a step which some church hierarchies still discourage their clergy from taking, precisely because they perceive a conflict between ecclesiastical and political involvement. Christianity, in spite of its "practical" elements, is, after all, an "other-worldly" religion. It focuses on God, on abstract spiritual values, and

on life after death. Both Jesus and Paul preached obedience to the state and in their own lives lived at peace with the secular authorities, as much as possible. Many of the German Protestant theologians did ultimately make the move from spiritual leader to political critic or even activist, but it must be kept in mind that, in doing so, they were defying centuries of tradition.

The theologians had an additional concern; it was their responsibility to preserve and protect the church as an institution. Most theologians would reject any form of resistance which would jeopardize the future existence of the German church. Church leaders had, no doubt, learned from the fate of the Communists what happened to groups who were viewed as enemies by the National Socialist state.

Additional factors complicate a study of the German Protestant theologians and their resistance to National Socialism. There is, for obvious reasons, a shortage of information on the resistance activities of theologians. Sermons and prayers are rarely published anyways, and certainly subversive material would not be recorded in times when its discovery might cost the life of the author. Similarly, records are not kept of meetings or informal encounters where political-theological discussion must have occurred. To the student of German history, forty years after World War II, therefore, there is much room for conjecture and speculation regarding the theologians and resistance.

The greatest obstacle to an understanding of the resistance

of the theologians, however, is the biased wisdom of hindsight. After all, it is easy to berate the theologians for their obtuseness, their racism, and their political naivete, when one sits securely distant from the event, both geographically and time-wise. It is difficult not to become frustrated with the theologians, or to subject them to unfair criticism. As educated men, supposedly possessing added insight and moral strength because of their Christian convictions, how could they not have foreseen the impending disaster? How could they, in other words, not have recognized in 1933, what we know now about the logical outcome of National Socialism? Even Karl Barth, who recognized very early the dangers of the new regime, and who spoke out unequivocally against National Socialism, did so, for the most part, from his home in Switzerland.

One cannot deny that the Protestant church, and the Protestant theologians, could have--and should have--done more to prevent the hideous crimes against humanity committed in the National Socialist state. German church leaders themselves were quick to acknowledge their burden of guilt. Still, there is one incontrovertible fact which confirms that the Protestant church did indeed effectively resist the National Socialist state. In spite of its shortcomings and the human weakness of its representatives, the church survived. Throughout the years of Nazi rule, the church was the only organization to successfully defy National Socialist control. The Confessing Church became

a focus of resistance not only because of its theological imperatives, but also because it was the only "non-coordinated" institution to which Protestants could belong. Instead of destroying the Protestant church, Nazi pressure indirectly occasioned a revival of interest in Christianity. That ability of the Protestant church to survive, and to emerge from the war as a viable institution, is the strongest testimonial to the resistance of the German Protestant theologians.